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Police raid smaller version of Pasig's shabu mart in Taguig

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Car of year update: SUV showdown from entry level to ultra luxury

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, February 22, 2006 ** 3 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 76 P18 www.inquirer.net

80 Abanse! Pinay members still missing in Guinsaugon

By Pennie Azarcon-dela Cruz

IT WAS TO BE ANONIMEN'S CELEBRATION, BUT the institution turned it into a tragedy.

And the women, most of them in their 20s, with few in their 60s, are among the 80 Abanse! Pinay members still missing after a rain-soaked mountain slope collapsed on the farming community of Guinsaugon and entombed it in mud.

Feb. 17 was the fifth anniversary of the Gaia-

SEE ABANSE! A11

No more sounds of life under mud up to 30 meters deep

By Volt Contreras

ST. BERNARD, SOUTHERN LEYTE—ON THE FIFTH day, the news from the field turned grim.

Rescuers yesterday stopped picking up sounds or movement that could have indicated survivors in an area where they hoped to find a school buried in the landslide. Three field officials, including a foreign expert, told the Inquirer.

Hopes of a miracle had lessened as the school

NO HOPE! A10

GMA: I'm best person to lead

President sees no need to cut short her term

By Christine O. Avendaño

COUP ATTEMPTS AND "sham" people power will be a thing of the past should the country shift to the parliamentary system, according to President Macapagal-Arroyo, and by her own reckoning she is the best person to lead the transition.

Speaking yesterday before the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (Focap), the President also said she did not believe that once the parliamentary system of government was adopted, she would have to cut short her term.

She again raised the need to amend the 1987 Constitution, saying that doing so would "create greater political certainty" in the country.

Ms Arroyo expressed the belief that like the tough economic reforms she had been carrying out, amending the Charter would "accelerate our society and allow it to grow and prosper."

There will be no need for

GMA A7

The way it was: Confetti to rain on Ayala Avenue

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THIS WAS THE WAY IT WAS, martial law babies.

Confetti will again rain down on Ayala Avenue in Makati City on Friday afternoon, as the opposition holds a mock reprise rigorous anti-dictatorship protests in the financial district that became a prelude to Edsa I.

In remembrance of the four-day civilian-backed uprising in February 1986, protes-

THE WAY! A9

TIE A YELLOW RIBBON: Edsa is now full of the signature color of the Filipino on the days he decided to go out there and regain his freedom.

Fugitive Magdalo seized inside communist lair

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau
Nikko Dizon
and Leige del Puerto

THE RICE AND TINAPA (SMOKED fish) were still hot. Another dish was still cooking.

From all indications, 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan, a fugitive Magdalo soldier, and communist rebel leaders were going to have a "breakfast meeting" at their Batangas hideout, according to the Philippine Air Force (PAF) spokesperson, Lt. Col. Bonifacio Padilla.

But before San Juan and his new comrades could partake of the meal and discuss whatever their agenda was, a platoon from the 740th Counter Group of the PAF Special Operations Wing assaulted the tree house and arrested them.

Padilla's information came directly from Air Force Col. Cris Tamondong who led the early morning assault.

"He (Tamondong) said there was rabbit salad, various dips and other kinds of fish still being cooked," Padilla said the boys told in a phone interview.

San Juan was one of four Magdalo leaders who escaped from detention in Fort Bonifacio, Makati City on Jan. 17 while on trial for the Oakwood mutiny in 2003 and who had since called for the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Another Magdalo leader, Navy Capt. Meinrat Pastilan, was arrested in late January.

Senior Supt. Francisco Dan Mamenguito, Batangas police director, said San Juan was in a white Mitsubishi Adventure with lawyer Jose Carlo Belmonte and a certain Albert Garpal when they were intercepted at about 8:45 p.m. at a checkpoint.

TO CATCH A REBEL: Lt. Lawrence San Juan is arrested near Padre Garcia town in Batangas. He was with a number of Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte. But 2 NPA leaders escaped.

ON DIXON

Belmonte was behind the wheel. The vehicle was registered to a Pedro Matol, according to Mamenguito.

He said police put up the check-

FUGITIVE A5

Stories scarred survivors tell

By Volt Contreras

ST. BERNARD, SOUTHERN Leyte—As the digging for survivors of Friday morning's massive landslide went into its sixth day today the streets of St. Bernard remained abuzz with countless tales connected to the disaster.

The stories ranged from those of rescuers pulling out a man's corpse that was cut in half, to a cop who had been disarmed lest he run amuck after losing his entire family.

There were also the story of a grandmother being rushed to the hospital after helicopters frightened her and made her blood pressure shoot up, and another story of a resident leaving town because her house stood next to the makeshift morgue and she could no longer stand the smell.

In one evacuation center, a man presented himself yesterday as the Bicolnon with his own tale of survival—brimming with details and apocalyptic horror.

Felipe Sario, 50, said he considered himself lucky for having

STORIES A12

EDSA I 20

THE PEOPLE

Almonte tips off Cory camp on coup

By Jose 'Peping' Cojuangco Jr.
with Jose Victor Z. Torres

(The following are excerpts from a book commissioned by Jose Cojuangco Jr. mostly based on interviews with him.)

IT WAS A VISIT FROM COL. JOSE ALmonte at Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr.'s home that tipped off the businessman that something was going to happen that third week of February 1986.

"He told me not to let Cory leave Manila. We're about to move," Cojuangco narrates.

What Almonte was asking was difficult to do. The opposition was in the middle of its civil disobedience campaign against Marcos. Their next stop was Cebu, then Davao. This had already been planned in advance and it might be impossible to back out.

Cojuangco told Almonte that he would consult his sister.

It had been a week since President Ferdinand Marcos was proclaimed President by his rubber stamp Batasang Pambansa on Feb. 15 following the snap election that was marred by fraud and violence.

Under pressure from Washington, Marcos agreed to call a presidential election to prove that he still had the "people's mandate." His opponent was Corazon Aquino, widow of his assassinated archrival, Benigno Aquino Jr.

The day after the proclamation, Aquino called

ALMONTE A20

FEB. 22, 1986, issue of the Inquirer.

THE MILITARY

A cool psywar expert rules the war room

By Roilo Golez

IT WAS AN EASY DRIVE THROUGH the main gate of Camp Aguinaldo on Feb. 22, 1986. There were no people yet although there were many fully armed soldiers at the Defense Ministry building.

I was immediately besieged by media people. Since I was then Postmaster General, I was asked: "Are you here as the emissary of Malacañang?" I didn't respond, turned off the cameras and microphones and went to the office of Minister Juan Ponce Enrile.

Inside were Commissioner Ramon Farolan, in fatigue battle gear, looking very aggrieved and retired Armed Forces Chief of Staff Ramon Espino. Their presence surprised me so both were identified with Marcos.

I got down to business immediately and asked Enrile: "Mr. Minister, are you serious about your declaration to break away from Marcos?" Enrile said I had shared many moments in previous days. I refused him as a mentor. He replied: "Yes, Roilo."

I looked at his eyes, saw the steely determination and told him: "In that case, I am going to announce my resignation as Postmaster General." I then went out and the media people again gathered up on me and I announced my resignation, giving them a copy of my resignation letter.

A/COOL A20

THE PALACE

Marcos would not leave; his family refused to leave him

By Rita B. Gadi

(Last of two parts)

MALACAÑANG WAS AGONIZing but no one, not even Marcos, seemed to be in control.

On the grounds, there were tanks, soldiers and piled sandbags. And the entire First Family was huddled in the Palace rooms.

Marcos was on the phone with Enrile, with Honasan, with some generals and, finally, with US Sen. Paul Laxalt.

It was when it became apparent that Marcos would not leave Malacañang, and his family would not leave him either, that the Palace was bombed by an unmarked helicopter on the morning of Feb. 24.

There were no casualties, but there was heavy damage on the roof deck.

A call from the US Embassy to the human-rights of the Malacañang Press Corps intimated that Amphibious Marines would launch an offensive on the Palace if Marcos were to attack the rebel camps at Edsa. The earlier movement of US warships into Subic Bay backed the threat.

It was reported that the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Enterprise, the USS Arkansas, the USS D.D. Ray, the USS Bagley, the USS Kenosee,

MARCOS A27

A2
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2006
Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

GMA: I'll work to scrap death penalty

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE TAKING OFFICE IN 2001, President Macapagal-Arroyo has categorically stated that she was for scrapping capital punishment and that she would see to the immediate passage of legislation to abolish the Death Penalty Law.

"I am all in favor of repealing the death penalty [law] and when it comes to the committee level [in Congress], I will certify it," said the President, who spoke at a forum of the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines.

The President made it clear that she wanted the death penalty scrapped because of her Catholic beliefs and not because she wanted to get on the good side of the Catholic Church, some of whom are supporting demands for her ouster.

Mrs Arroyo made the statement when she was asked about her recent changing position on capital punishment.

She was asked to explain why she voted as a senator for lethal injection as a mode of execution; or why when she was Vice President she joined a mass march for the execution of Leo Echegaray, the first convict to be executed under the revived Death Penalty Law, and why when she became President, she granted so many reprieves to death convicts.

The 1987 Constitution abolished the death penalty. However, Congress revived the Death Penalty Law which took effect on Jan. 1, 1993. The law was later amended. In March 1996, prescribing lethal injection as the method of execution.

The President denied having voted for the Death Penalty Law but said she voted for lethal injection because she thought it was "a more humane way of executing the death penalty."

She said she joined the anti-death penalty movement not to reject its law. The President said she was misled to say much for Echegaray's execution and neither did she say anything about his execution.

Mrs Arroyo also said that early in her presidency, she had said that she was in favor of executing some convicts "because at that time kidnapping incidences were rampant."

She said that there were times when you have to resort to extreme measures to drive a message home.

"But really, Divine Providence has been very good to me. By the time the death penalty was revived [as] as a kidnapper, kidnapping had gone down to zero," she said.

To the question of she was seeking the repeal of the death penalty as a political accommodation to Catholic bishops, Mrs Arroyo answered she was "yes, like."

"It's a question of my Catholic beliefs. I was born and baptized and raised a Catholic," she said.

Deposed President Joseph Estrada, who opposed the execution of seven death convicts, declared a moratorium on executions in 2000 in deference to the Catholic Church's Jubilee Year. (Christine O. Avendaño)

Palace to opposition: Don't use pork for Leyte victims

By Gil Cabacungan Jr., Norman Bordadora and Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG SPOKESMAN JOSE DE Venecia was urging legislators to donate part of their pork barrel for the relief and rehabilitation of landslide victims in Southern Leyte, Malacañang yesterday slammed opposition legislators for wanting to do the same thing and succeeded them of politicking.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said opposition lawmakers like Rep. Francis Escudero should dig deep into their pockets rather than their pork barrel in making donations to victims of natural disasters.

"Probably they should donate their own money. They don't need to wait for the CDF [Countryside Development Fund] to help the Leyte victims," said Defensor, briefing at the opposition's complaints about the slow release of their pork barrel funds while administration allies had been given theirs.

Defensor said he did not know why the opposition members had not yet received their pork barrel. He said charges that the budget office was withholding the funds because of the opposition's attempt to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo last year showed that the opposition would stop at nothing to stall their agenda.

House Majority leader Prospero Nograles, who had donated P100,000 from his pork barrel, also known as Priority Development Assistance Fund, took a swipe at party-list groups for not doing the same thing.

"We have a tragedy in St. Bernard where many poor people are affected. But, what are they doing to help landslide victims?" Nograles said, adding, "Did these people help? Or they say they speak for the poor."

All 35 party-list lawmakers receive P40 million each per year in PDAF similar to the amount enjoyed by the rest of the 226-member chamber.

Nograles said Malacañang and De Venecia were "burning bridges and earth to help," while others were still busy politicking.

On Friday night, De Venecia pledged legislators to raise a "regular reaction fund" to aid the victims. He donated P100,000 from his own pocket and Deputy Speaker Raul del Mar gave P100,000, as they launched the fund following a call to Southern Leyte Rep. Roger Mercado to save allies the landslide of mud.

De Venecia urged both opposition and administration congressmen to donate between P50,000 and P100,000 from their pork barrel to raise P15 million.

"The tragedy demands that each of us must respond immediately and come to the aid of our brother countrymen in Southern Leyte," he said.

Meanwhile, Negros Oriental Rep. Jacinto Paras criticized Senate President Franklin Drilon for announcing he was donating P20 million from his pork barrel although Drilon had announced long ago that he had given up his pork barrel altogether.

"He all appreciate his generosity but I can't help but wonder where on earth will he get his P20 million because in my understanding, he is not allocated what was supposed to have given up their PDAF?" Paras said.

Mercado's mother, acting secretary of interior and local government, called on the country's local executives, from governors and mayors to barangay officials, to contribute to the Leyte relief effort.

Andaman said he was asking the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines to pass a resolution expressing its intention to mobilize for the relief operations in St. Bernard.

He thanked the local government units that had sent funds and goods to the area.

"It is heartwarming to note that during calamities like this, our countrymen from different parts of the country, poised in Southern Leyte, our LGUs are ready to extend their all-out support to ease the pain and sufferings of the victims," Andaman said.

Noynoy loses his post

A HEADLESS BY THE House of Representatives yesterday saw Cebu Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III losing his post as deputy speaker for Luzon.

Aquino, who voted to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo and was replaced by Ilocos Sur Rep. Ilda Singson, resigned as vice was replaced by Pangasinan Rep. Genaro Teñoso as chair of the committee on public works.

Bukidnon Rep. Hernan Acuña, who also voted to impeach Mrs Arroyo, lost the chairmanship of the committee on housing.

He was replaced by Manila Rep. Mike Nieto.

Cebu Rep. Gwen Martinez, another pro-impeachment legislator, lost her seat as the Committee on appropriations. She was replaced by Antipolo Rep. Nicki Sumulong.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, another ally of the impeachment on economic affairs, was tapped to be the chair of the committee on appropriations following the appointment of Commissioner Sol Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. as budget secretary.

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Filipinos hardly upbeat about '06

THIRTY PERCENT OF FILIPINOS believe their personal lives would improve in the next 12 months, according to a quality of life survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations from Nov. 27 to Dec. 4, 2005.

The SWS 4th quarter 2005 survey also showed that 23 percent of respondents nationwide expected their quality of life to get worse. Forty-seven percent expected no change.

The SWS pointed out that this outlook was hardly an improvement on the net personal optimism score of zero in the August 2005 survey, when 29 percent said they were optimistic and 27 percent said they were pessimistic.

The SWS issues the results of its quarterly surveys piecemeal. The results of the personal quality of life survey were released yesterday.

On Dec. 28, 2005, the SWS released results of the same 4th quarter 2005 survey showing that 95 percent of Filipinos said they would face the New Year with hope, compared to 12 percent who said they would face 2006 with fear.

The SWS explained that the apparent wrinkle between optimism, which features in every quarterly survey, was different from the "hope vs fear for the New Year" item, which is tracked only during the fourth quarter of every year.

SWS said it also asked respondents to compare their quality of life at present to that of 12 months ago. Nineteen percent said it had got less better, while 44 percent claimed it had worsened, for a net of minus 25.

This was statistically similar to the previous quarter's net score of minus 26, with 21 percent respondents and 47 percent to worse.

The proportion of losers has stayed at 40 percent for more than five years, the SWS said.

"Since the time series began in 1981, losers have generally predominated over winners," SWS said in a statement.

There were only during the early years of the Aquino administration when the two groups were roughly equal, showing a happier state of affairs then," it said.

Large gaps between losers and winners also showed up at the height of the Gulf War and in the last years of the Marcos and Estrada administrations, SWS said.

As for the economy, 16 percent of respondents said they were optimistic about it while 47 percent were pessimistic. This was similar to the August 2005 results, in which 12 percent declared themselves optimistic and 51 percent said they were pessimistic. Jamby Atienza, *PCIJ Research*

Trial could take toll on Erap, says doc

THE JOURNEY FROM HIS JUST house in Tanay, Rizal, to the Sandiganbayan Complex in Quezon City for his plunder trial could take a toll on the health of deposed President Joseph Estrada, according to Estrada's United States-based surgeon.

"From a purely medical standpoint," it would be better if the deposed leader were to be allowed to stay somewhere close to the Sandiganbayan by the duration of his upcoming trial, Dr. Christopher Shaw said.

"That is, my understanding, he will be in Metro from Tanay to the court in the morning and will sit in the witness stand to be questioned all day afterwards he will take the same long trip back to Tanay," observed Shaw, who successfully performed a three-stage coronary bypass operation on Estrada in December 2004.

Estrada is scheduled to testify in his plunder and perjury trial on March 13 and every Wednesday after that. The court has reduced the trial days from twice to only once a week for the duration of Estrada's testimony.

Apart from the toll of the long journey to and from Tanay, Estrada's physically fit to stand the rigors of a day-long trial, said Shaw.

But he said the control procedure did not need to be confined to a hospital.

He said Estrada had recovered fully from the 2004 operation and although he near experience some discomfort, it was no more or less than a routine five-year, said Shaw.

He suggested that Estrada be allowed to stand and stretch his knees from time to time while giving his testimony.

"Prolonged sitting may cause him some discomfort. It is only natural for anybody who has undergone knee surgery to feel that way," Shaw said.

Shaw, who arrived last Friday with another surgical team to operate the weekend in Tanay with Estrada. Aaliyah E. Rivera

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Ex-UP veep dies

DR. SONIA LIZA Cantos-Gonzales, 59, a former vice president of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, passed away on Feb. 19 in Manaoag, Lingbanga del Norte, at the age of 60.

She is survived by her husband Sawyer Ulrich Gonzales; children Philip Albert, Vincent Angelo, Orsino Gregorio and Constantine Gonzales; parents Jose Antolin and Josefa Lizada Cantos; grandchildren Nathaniel Vincent, Cayetano Philip, Albert Hugo, Ana Isaac and Andreas Carlo; sisters Ma. Victoria, Ma. Theresa Adriana, Santos Josue, Angela and Petra; and brothers-in-law Armando Fernando.

Her remains lie in the Church of the Risen Lord, UP Diliman. Services will be held every day after 6 p.m. until Feb. 23.

A Mass of the Resurrection will be held on Feb. 24 at 9 a.m. with cremation to follow at the Loyola Memorial Chapel in Marikina City.

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Left 'set stage' for Edsa I, insists Satur

By Michael Lim Ubac

SEVEN DUMPY EDSA PROTESTERS THE apparent exclusion of the contributions of the Left to People Power from most official accounts of the event, saying militant activists and progressive groups "toiled in the nights to set the stage for that culminating act in 1986."

In a privilege speech late Monday the senior party-list representative of Bayan Muna reminded colleagues that although the underground movement had functioned the 1986 snap elections, the historic Edsa uprising was the "culmination, the peak of a long and arduous struggle of a great number of Filipinos" since the early 1970s.

Ocampo and his wife Carolina "Bobbie" Malay went underground at the height of the Marcos dictatorship. He was eventually arrested and imprisoned for 14 years. Ocampo became a member of the National Democratic Front panel in the peace talks with the government after he was pardoned by then President Corazon Aquino in 1986.

Ocampo lamented that in the so-called official and semi-official histories of the uprising and in this year's 20th anniversary commemoration, "there is really no mention of the invaluable contributions of the progressive people's movement whose schemers and leaders fought for the longest time and sacrificed the most in lives, long military detention and other victimizes of human rights."

Ocampo pointed out that official historians made no mention of these following glorious events that he said led to Edsa I:

- The First Quarter Storm that "evoked the foundations of the Marcos regime and the entire corrupt political system in 1970 and in the years preceding the declaration of martial law."
- The many young Filipinos who left life and life to serve the people and even offer their lives for freedom under martial law and the dictatorship.
- The tens of thousands of activists who were jailed without charges, killed, tortured to forcibly disappeared.
- The victims of massacres and hundreds of the villages and during demonstrations in the cities.

"The silence over these important aspects of the anti-Marcos resistance speaks volumes about the official bias for Edsa so-called big players of Edsa I and against those who had toiled in the nights to set the stage for that culminating act in 1986," he said.

But perhaps the worst attitude towards People Power comes from Sen. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, according to Ocampo.

"Ms. Arroyo has become a pariah to People Power for many reasons the people already know: lying, cheating, stealing, and suppressing the people's rights and freedoms. She has been a target of a movement that seeks to call on the people to remove her from office through another exercise of People Power. Could this be why she would not commemorate People Power and the fight against the dictatorship?"

He noted that several committees of the House and Senate had gathered evidence and testimonies pointing to the Arroyo administration as "accountable for the fast disappearance, misuse, if not plunder," of the P55 billion in ill-gotten wealth recovered from the Marcoses.

Ocampo pressed for the passage of House Bill No. 3115 to recognize the "heroes and martyrs who offered their lives to supreme sacrifice for justice, freedom and democracy."

The bill's passage "will be a humble acknowledgment coming from Congress that in fact owes its restoration mainly because of the Filipino people's action in 1986."

Prelate calls for reliving 'sacred memory'

LOLO OPE—THE president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines has called on Filipinos to relive the "sacred memory" and principles of the first Edsa revolution as the country commemorates the 20th anniversary of the People Power revolt that toppled the dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo said the people should continue aspiring for "good governance, characterized by justice, honesty, credibility, accountability and integrity."

"They should not stop and let bad guys," said Lagdameo in a statement.

Legacy

He urged the people who had gathered at Edsa to tell their stories of the event.

"To scroll such stories is to be grateful, to be challenged once more not to sit on the laurels of its successes, but to relive the principles and values that were left behind as a lasting legacy," he said.

The bishops of Negros said the Edsa revolution was "unfinished business" that must be rekindled.

"There are still a lot of things to be done to attain the government we deserved 20 years ago," said Bishop Jose Ma. of Dumaguete City.

"We detected then and fought for a government that would truly work for the people, but human as we are, there is still a lot that must be done to fulfill that dream," said he.

"Edsa is a beautiful memory," said Bishop Vicente Navarro.

Patriotism

"But being a church of hope, we hope that the memory of Edsa where we showed our genuine love of country, our patriotism and love of people will be rekindled in every Pilipino," he said.

Lagdameo said Pilipinos failed to pursue the vision of the first Edsa and allow it to bear fruit, noting how corruption "started to creep in again."

But he said "something good has happened and is happening today," and urged the people to remain looking for good governance.

"The dry wood needs only a spark for it to become a conflagration. The spirit of grab and corruption still in us needs only the spark of social transformation through moral values had become a fire that burns to the hearts of a critical mass of informed Filipinos who will effectively pursue the spirit of Edsa I," he said.

Some other groups marking the 20th EDSA Dos: 1. Legislators launched a campaign for national reconciliation through individual ... recognition. Senior F Bargas Jr., PDI Human Bureau, and Christine Jo-... reports. Marlo Ibarra, with a report from Cecil P Torres, PDI Visayas Bureau

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Arrested lawyer kin of Quezon City mayor

By Leiza A. del Puerto

DAILY INQUIRER

The second man arrested with Lt. Lawrence San Juan yesterday morning in Padre Garcia town in Batangas was in a similar situation nearly a decade ago.

Jose Christopher Belmonte was in a car carrying the rebel leader Nilo de la Cruz when the latter was arrested in Marikina, Bulacan, in October 1997. As this time, rebel Belmonte was the la Cruz's "driver and bodyguard."

Belmonte, a nephew of Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, was wounded in the chest during an alleged fire fight clash between his group and pursuing government agents in Marikina.

His captors brought him to a military hospital in Metro Manila for treatment.

Yesterday, Belmonte found himself in the same vehicle ferrying San Juan, a key officer of the Magdalo group, and a certain Albert Capul.

Policemen and soldiers stopped their car at a checkpoint in Barangay Ilaya Felipe in Padre Garcia.

Just like nine years ago, they were apparently fleeing from government troops.

Peaceful surrender

This time around, however, there was no fire fight. The group surrendered peacefully, the police said.

"Unyal claims to be a poultry farm boy. He is Jesus Puerto Princess (City)," said Director General Avelino Lotuelbas, chief of the Philippine National Police.

But the police have detained "six commissioners" in Capitol town, mostly during tactical interrogation, according to Lotuelbas.

The PNP chief did not elaborate.

"Belmonte is a lawyer ... We have a background in the leftist movement," the police chief said, referring to the 1987 arrest.

In fact, one of those who arrested Belmonte in Bulacan was now the head of the Armed Forces Southern Luzon Command, Lt. General Pedro Cabuay, according to Lotuelbas.

The Southern Luzon Command covers the provinces of Quezon, Rizal, Laguna, Mindoro, Palawan, Bumbilan and Batangas.

Cabuay was then chief of the Intelligence Service Group of the Philippine Army.

Son of mining exec

Belmonte, according to sources reports on the 1997 arrest, is a son of mining executive Bonnie Belmonte.

He was a student leader at the University of the Philippines, where he studied law and business administration the years records said.

In 1983 when former Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. was assassinated, the young Belmonte was an officer of the student council of the then UP College of Arts and Sciences.

He was also a fraternity man, belonging to Alpha Sigma, a group which produced leftist leaders in the past, including alleged members of the central committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Lying low

In 1997, the Inquirer quoted his fraternity brothers as saying that Belmonte had "been lying low" and had even settled down years before his arrest.

Former Alpha Sigmans include Sen. Gregorio Honasan, former Public Works Undersecretary Rodolfo Palma and once Malacañang Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos' Defense Secretary Fidel V. Ramos.

Two other fraternity members, UP Collegian editor Antonio Tagaza Jr. and student leader Wilfredo Nagg, had joined the New People's Army in the early 1970s. Both have since been killed in separate encounters with the military.

Fugitive Magdalo seized inside NPA lair

From page A1

point ahead of a unit they were going to conduct on a mega-farm in Barangay Bucal in Padre Garcia town, some 80 kilometers south of Manila, at around 3 a.m. The farm is about 6 km from the checkpoint in Barangay San Felipe.

Two-week intelligence work

Director General Arturo Lomibao, Philippine National Police chief, said the raid was the result of a weeklong intelligence gathering by a composite team from the military and police.

He said "a top-level meeting" between officials of the central committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the Magdalo group was supposed to be held on the farm.

But Bernardo, commander of the 740th Combat Wing, said his unit did not know that the meeting was between the Magdalo and the communist insurgents and that San Juan would be present at the meeting.

All his team knew, he said, was the contraband would be held by the CPP.

Escape by motorcycle

As soon as the government troops entered the farm, the people in the compound scampered and escaped toward the mountains in the Barangay Quezon boundary.

Tumanda said not a single shot was fired during the raid. "But during a previous operation a few minutes later, the fleeing rebels started to fire at us. It lasted for just a few minutes," he said.

He said he also heard the sound of a vehicle leaving the farm.

Tumanda said he later learned that two men escaped from the area on a motorcycle. It was possible that San Juan was one of the men and later transferred to the van, he said.

Montenegro said San Juan and his companions did not resist arrest when they were flagged down.

Confiscated from them were a Magdalo flag and personal effects.

Haggard, handcuffed

At around noon, a haggard-looking San Juan was escorted by armed military personnel out of a house where he was held after his arrest. His hands were cuffed behind his back.

Wearing a checkered long-sleeved shirt over a white shirt and denim pants, San Juan was taken to a waiting van and later in a helicopter for was flown to Fort Bonifacio.

Before the helicopter took off, San Juan issued a short statement to reporters.

"Our situation today reflects the true state of Filipinos. The fight continues!" he said as his fist came pushed his head down.

Padilla told San Juan's wife with two commanders of the Alpha Double's Army (SBN), the armed wing of the CPP identified as Leo Velasco and Tino Montanes.

"The 740th Combat Group was targeting the two CPP leaders but the ISG Intelligence Service Group) was able to pinpoint that San Juan was going to meet with them," Padilla said.

However, Velasco and Montanes eluded arrest, Padilla said.

Some two hours after the raid, two other men in two separate vehicles were arrested at a checkpoint near Lipa City, also in Batangas. The police suspected that they too had come from the farm.

Two regions

Director Roy Sarilla, PNP Intelligence Group chief, said the two-week surveillance that led to the arrest of San Juan covered at least two regions.

It was no accident that the police and military had virtually surrounded Batangas with checkpoints.

Earlier, the police received information "from a tiende" that top officers of the CPP/NPA were going to meet with Magdalo officers on a farm in Padre Garcia at dawn.

It appeared the group got wind of the police operation a few minutes before government troops reached the farm.

The arrest of San Juan confirmed earlier reports of the "unholy alliance" between renegade Magdalo soldiers and the communist rebels, said Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay, commander of the Philippine Army's Southern Luzon Command.

"This is an unholy alliance between two groups with opposing ideologies who were to topple [the] government," Cabuay said at a news briefing at Camp Miguel Malvar.

Inquirer reporters from the local unit of the NPA in the province confirmed that a meeting with San Juan and the communist leaders had indeed taken place.

At the news conference, authorities presented recovered documents they recovered from the farm.

Among the items were resumes, endorsements and lists of recruited tactical officers of the NPA in Southern Tagalog. Also recovered were dozens of bullets, for M-16 rifles and lists of military units in Batangas and nearby provinces.

Religious meeting

Belmonte said the "top-level meeting" in Padre Garcia between San Juan and CPP leaders was supposed to be a religious gathering of Iglesia ni Kristo members.

The farm is owned by businessman Tomas Jesus Morales. With a report from Inna Inandiegan

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PHILIPPINE ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

45th Annual Convention

February 23-25, 2006 • Philippine International Convention Center

"Quality Health Care: The Family Physician's Perspective"

MESSAGES

My warmest felicitations to the officers and members of the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians, Inc. on your 45th Anniversary and Annual Convention.

Your theme, "Quality Care: The Family Physician's Perspective", reflects our commitment as you provide the best possible healthcare for our Filipino families in their homes and communities. Your efforts to upgrade your competencies and to excel in your chosen field are vital to the quest for better health for our growing population. As your profession, you are always able to put America under your care like a medical service.

I trust that this event will contribute greatly to the advancement of the medical profession and to many healthcare issues and concerns. I commend you for your dedication to your profession and to your commitment.

Mabuhay!

(Sgd.) FLE. GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President, Republic of the Philippines

I convey my warmest greetings to the officers and members of the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP) as they celebrate their 45th Anniversary and Annual Convention with the theme "Quality Health Care: The Family Physician's Perspective".

The Department of Health recognizes your unwavering commitment to the task we government's efforts in providing healthy, affordable and accessible health care to all, the family physician is the most convenient to look for our continuing improvement of our health system.

By collective actions, we can provide meaningful development and innovative country towards better health and greater progress.

I wish you every success in all your endeavors as you seek another high point in your history of productive service to the public.

Congratulations and warmest regards always!

(Sgd.) FRANCISCO T. DUQUE III, MD, MSc
Secretary of Health

My warmest greetings to the officers and members of the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians, Inc. on your 45th Anniversary and Annual Convention on February 23-25, 2006 with the theme, "Quality Health Care: The Family Physician's Perspective".

Your organization is an accomplishment because it has been made possible by the collective efforts of its members who have been dedicated to the practice of family medicine. Your commitment to excellence in the delivery of health services to our people in line with our accelerating urban renewal and development programs.

We look forward to the successful fruition of this milestone event.

Take care and prosper. "Kalusugan mo, Mayaman".

Ahoy sa Manila, Bahay ng Bawat!

(Sgd.) JOSE L. ATIENZA JR.
Mayor, City of Manila

Warmest greetings from the Philippine Medical Association (PMA)!

Congratulations to the Officers and Members of the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians on the occasion of its 45th Anniversary and Annual Convention!

Our commission maintains that every Filipino should be provided with quality health care. The convention theme, "Quality Health Care: The Family Physician's Perspective" is in harmony very much in line with the health objectives of our commission. We commend the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians for its various continuing medical education (CME) programs that assist the 'Sing Albularyo' in the emergency and needs of our family physicians who, all, face another issue who usually have to live consistent with patients.

PMA's time-tested accreditation procedures and system has you have a very productive and successful convention.

(Sgd.) MODESTO O. CLAMAR, MD
President, Philippine Medical Association

As President of the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians, I am deeply honored to welcome all the participants to its 45th Anniversary and Annual Convention with the theme "Quality Health Care: The Family Physician's Perspective". More than any other specialty, Family Medicine's concern for individuals and families continue to predominate because of the broad scope of care provided by the specialty. To answer this concern, the organizing committee has planned activities and programs that will address issues and developments are included in the convention. While the effort to maintain an academic tone, it also provides an opportunity to meet new friends and renew the ties with old friends.

Again: Welcome and Mabuhay!

(Sgd.) REYNALDO A. ILLADA, MD
President, Philippine Academy of Family Physicians

"This year's convention underscores the importance of the Academy's contribution to national progress as it has been in the last three decades of its remarkable existence.

With the theme - "Quality Healthcare: The Family Physician's Perspective", we are challenged to consistently work to enhance and to maintain competence and a sense of responsibility in meeting the health needs of the Filipino people. Continuous learning activities are to meet the high level of knowledge and supportive technology to achieve our goal towards this end is the mission of our profession. We're proud for members who have been consistently honored with recognition in providing the most needed quality health care and able to be responsive and cognizant of our society to help them achieve a better quality of life.

Let us forge a stronger Academy in our role as providers of medical and healthcare services!

Welcome and Mabuhay!

(Sgd.) SORAYA P. ABUSHALEH, MD
Vice President, PAFP and Board Chair, Negrense University

Day One • February 23, 2006

Pastoral Opening Prayer/Invocation/Commencement Ceremonies

Industry-sponsored Luncheon Symposia
- Allergic Rhinitis
- Complementary and alternative treatment for menopausal symptoms
- Beyond GI reduction: new perspectives in dyspepsia management
- The ORAL opportunity: evolving standard of care in respiratory infections
- The role of allergy in asthma - is it significant? who are the key?
- Physiologic effects of asthma: Beyond a narrowed airway
- Allergic and Nonallergic Rhinitis: Which Is Which? Does It Matter?
- Changing considerations in the treatment of hypertension and DM

Cultural Evening Meeting

Welcome Night

Day Two • February 24, 2006

General Sessions

Simultaneous Scientific Sessions (Focusing on Appropriate Psychotic Tools)
- Cardiac chest pain — Dyspepsia
- Lower GI bleeding — Hematuria
- Joint pains — Dermatologic Conditions
- Goiter
- Bloody diarrhea

Concurrent Hands-on Workshops

Simultaneous Scientific Sessions (Pharmacoeconomics)
- Anti-osteoporosis drugs — Anti-dementia drugs
- Nasal sprays — Osteoporosis prevention vs. treatment
- Analgesics — Anti-asthmatic Drugs
- Anti-hypertensive drugs — Anti-arthritic Drugs

Industry-sponsored Luncheon Symposia
- ASSIST NPLA: Experts meet in a clinical practice
- A cure with AZ in psoriasis? WHY
- Post-menopausal osteoporosis: prevention or treatment: what's the best way to manage?
- Erectile dysfunction: the latest in diagnosis and management: Philippine perspective
- Symptom Relief: Is it as easy as 1-2-3?
- The interferons in virology: a review from outpatient clinics
- Antiviral agents for the treatment of common viral diseases
- Antiviral agents for the treatment of common viral diseases
- Pharmacological management of hypertension
- Pharmacological management of type 2 diabetes
- Simultaneous Symposia on Antiviral agents for Outpatient

Simultaneous Scientific Sessions
- Hypertensive pulmonary — Asthma and Allergies
- Hepatitis — Urinary tract infections
- Low back pain/Rheumatic pain — Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus — Pediatric care: common problems
- Anemia

Oath Taking of New Fellows

Annual Business Night

Day Three • February 25, 2006

Pentecost

Simultaneous Scientific Sessions
- Morning gathering — Announcements/Commitments
- Business Meeting — The "E" in Medicine: Lessons in EBM
- Disaster Management Training — Medical emergency management
- Jamboree — Unconfirmed
- Accountable Leadership — Activities of Accountable Leadership
- Emerging diseases among travelers — Travel medicine (Prophylaxis & Vaccinations)
- Hypertensive emergencies — Intravenous drugs
- Quality culture: readiness — Blood therapy
- Nonviolence: Imperatives — Mothering and Baby
- Posture analysis — Maternal and perinatal illness
- Prevention in family — Influenza Update: Avian Flu Scare
- Teaching community assessment

Industry-sponsored Luncheon Symposia
- Nutritionally pursuing and standard days method
- Pharmacoeconomic studies for treating allergies
- Engaging the public in the fight against cancer

Simultaneous Scientific Sessions
- The PPSV2 project — Perinatal transmission of CP viruses
- Endometriosis/hormonal — Lipoid Pneumonia
- menopause — Medical Update
- OPD consultations — Cytopathology
- Dysfunctional uterine bleeding — Basic Electrocardiography
- Menopause — Management of common gastric problems

Environmental Disaster Prone Preparedness

Closing/Valedictory Ceremonies

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Over-all Chair: **Soraya P. Abusaleh, MD**
Co-Chairs: **Chiclecire S. Serrano-Tinio, MD**
Secretary: **Jessica Marilyn F. Garcia, MD**
Treasurer: **Annie A. Francisco, MD**

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Awards — Rosario B. Ros, MD

Close to 4,000 family practitioners are expected to attend the 45th Annual Convention of the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians. Advanced registration figure has reached the 2,500 mark and organizers expect some more before the start of this three-day gathering of Family Medicine specialists. Convention activities will run from February 23 to 25 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

Focusing on the theme - *Quality Health Care: The Family Physician's Perspective*, the convention pulls in more than 30 authorities on various medical topics. At any one time, up to ten sessions could run simultaneously to enable attendees to select topics of special interest to them.

Highlights:

Aside from its well-planned scientific program, organizers also consider the fellowship night and exhibit as potential crowd-drawers. The annual business meeting shall take place on February 23, Morning Session, PACC. The general assembly is set on the following day, February 24.

Awardees:

Dr. Zenaida E. Leopando, PAFP President from 1984 to 1986 and presently Vice Chancellor for Planning & Development of UP Manila shall go down in PAFP history as the first Bautista/R. Angeles Memorial Lecturer. She will lay forth the convention's opening program.

Also sharing the limelight are Dr. Isabel/ma Al. Santamaya (Family Physician of the Year), Dr. Josefina Isidro Laperla (Most Outstanding Family Physician in Community Service), Dr. Edwina Dandoloro Cabato, President of Zamboanga City Chapter (Leadership Awardee), Dr. Diana Dolores Capati-Lopez of Pampanga Chapter (Most Active Chapter Secretary) and Dr. Teresita Yap Dy of Cebu Chapter (Most Active Chapter Treasurer/Amelia Dajunco Memorial Awardee).

Pampanga Chapter shall be cited as the year's most outstanding chapter and most active chapter in CME. Zamboanga City Chapter is once again the most active chapter in community service.

Inductees:

This year, PAFP is slated to add the names of 20 family practitioners to its roster of fellows, and induct 40 new diplomates (DFM) and 110 certified family physicians.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

GMA: I'm best person to lead RP

By Inquirer staff

"coups and sham people power" in a parliamentary government, and as Charter change gets under way, she would continue to focus on the economy and implement her reforms, she said.

"And let me also make clear: I believe I am the best person to lead this nation through this transition," she said.

But at an earlier event, former Vice President Teofisto Guingona warned of "guerrilla warfare" from groups "being pushed to the limits" by Ms. Arroyo's continued stay in office.

Guingona said the guerrilla warfare would be similar to the struggle against martial law, and even to the Filipino resistance to the Japanese occupation during World War II.

"[The authorities] will have the momentum at the beginning, but the resistance will continue," he insisted. "That will be tantamount to civil war, and we don't like that. It's not the right solution."

Honoring Edsa I

Ms. Arroyo, who is being criticized for choosing to mark the 20th anniversary of Edsa I with a low-key commemoration, said Filipinos should "honor the struggle of Edsa by continuing to reform our political system," among other things.

"The world embraced Edsa I in 1986. The world reiterated Edsa II in 2001," she said in a speech at the Pacific Heights at the Dusit Hotel in Makati City.

"The world will not forgive us Edsa III but instead will condemn the Philippines as a country whose political system is hopelessly unstable, and the Filipinos as among the finest people in the world but who manage to desire themselves to the least," the President said.

She warned that under an Edsa III, the country would neither be able to court investments from abroad nor bring social justice to the people.

'Waiting'

Asked what it would take her to resign, Ms Arroyo said: "Nothing."

"If I remember right, President [Corazon] Aquino had her dream of [resignation] calls, and there was a bloody coup [attempt]—for big lies timed , but she did not resign," Ms Arroyo said of her former ally, who has also called on her to step down.

She added: "I have a mandate from the people. I have been re-affirmed. The Supreme Court has not overturned my proclamation, and re-elected as I have a term until 2010 and I intend to serve out that term."

Ms Arroyo also said she was elected to make difficult decisions, and had indeed made them.

"Our without mistakes on my part and certainly without significant criticism," she said, adding:

"But I have the experience of hindsight and I aim to fulfill my term with a steady hand on the helm."

Police officials had earlier said that should the Charter change process call for the President to cut her term short of parliamentary elections were held in 2007, she would comply.

But when asked yesterday to comment on the matter, Ms Arroyo said: "I don't think Charter change would result in that."

The sooner, the better

The President said she hoped the country would have a new Constitution and a new system of government soon.

"The sooner this happens, the sooner we would be able to move the country forward," she said.

She also said reforming the "poisoned political system" was one of five measures that would address the continuing rifts in society.

"The divisiveness in our society that came about with the two Edsas has not yet been solved," she said, adding that this was why the country continued to have "rogue elements."

According to Ms Arroyo, the government needs to provide the people with services they deserve "because poverty is the most important recruitment ground for any destabilizer."

"It is not the coups that we are concerned about. What we should address are the destabilizers," she said.

Ms Arroyo said the rogue elements would not succeed, and reiterated her "great faith and trust in the loyalty" of the military and the police.

She cited the arrest yesterday of the fugitive mayor Lt. Lawrence Lee Aun at a checkpoint in Batangas. [More] on Page A[illegible]

Bully in schoolyard

Asked what she had been doing to unite the forces of the two Edsas, the President said she had added five army "main force battalions."

"And I am still open to unity for those who are willing to accept an invitation," she said. "But really, I have stopped chasing the bully around the schoolyard, and I am working for fundamental political reforms so that divisive elements in our system will be a thing of the past."

Asked if the bully she had stopped chasing was a reference to former President Aquino, Ms Arroyo replied curtly: "I don't want to speak about personalities. One of the things that we must reform in our system is, we must have a more political system rather than personalities."

In her speech, the President vowed to pursue political reforms to elevate "greater stability" and to "diminish the political effect on the Philippine economy."

Political maneuvering has become one great sellers industry," she lamented, citing "people who pursued their presence in Edsa a long time ago into a lifetime franchise of seeking against governments whose leaders do not tackle hell on them."

Civil disobedience

Guingona, who served as Ms Arroyo's vice president from 2001 to 2004, spoke to Monday night at the forum "What's Next ..." sponsored by the Concerned Men for a Better Philippines at the Manila Polo Club in Makati City.

He said the Arroyo administration's plans to shift to the parliamentary system and its proposed antiterror law fell were fueling public opposition.

If there are enabled enough, "the challenge will no longer be peaceful ... but of guerrilla warfare in the days to come," he said.

Guingona said "civil disobedience" was another option being studied.

He said civil disobedience could be expressed through the nonpayment of taxes or withdrawal of support from the government by the bureaucracy, and even by students going on a weeklong vacation with the consent of their parents and their school administrators.

Muslims' support

At the open forum, Nikki Brynildsen, secretary general of the Muslim organization Anakbayan, said his group would back civil disobedience in Mindanao.

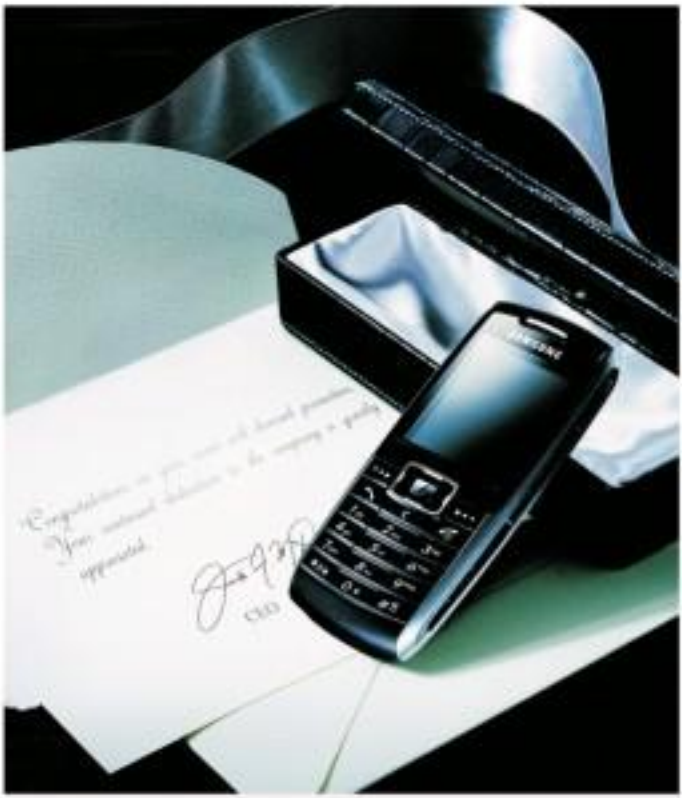
"We will lead in the nonpayment of taxes in the Muslim areas in Mindanao," Brynildsen said.

Stickers calling for civil disobedience were distributed to those who attended the forum.

The stickers have the pictures of Ian Fran and other alleged mutineers—Capt. Nathaniel Rabonza and Lt. Lieutenants Porfirio Batalang and Antonio Trillanes.

The protesters have also rallied for civil disobedience to bring down the Arroyo administration. *With a report from Fe Zamora*

PRESIDENT Arroyo explains to the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines that in her choice to put economic reforms in place, she has had to make a number of unpopular decisions. PHOTO BY JOAN BONDOC



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PBSP's 35 Years of Leadership in Corporate Social Responsibility & 18 Years of Pioneering Social Development Work in the Visayas

Braving new fronts towards productivity and self-reliance

THE POLITICAL TURMOIL AND economic uncertainty of the 1970s were the impetus for 58 business leaders to consolidate their efforts in empowering the poor and uplifting the Philippine society. With the growing number of companies considering Cebu province as social development, the basic idea that business' sole purpose is the creation of wealth is significantly revolutionized. This expansion of collective corporate initiative is the Philippine Business for Social Progress or PBSP.

PBSP's beginnings were met with numerous failures and disappointments that challenged its perseverance. But with the unrelenting support of its member companies, the Foundation has succeeded in its aim to participate in nation building by implementing poverty reduction programs and developing self-reliant communities.

For the past 35 years, it has raised and disbursed P1.4 billion for more than 5,000 social development projects that have benefited 3.27 million Filipino households — urban poor communities, marginal fisherfolk, upland and lowland farmers, agrarian reform beneficiaries, and indigenous peoples. To this day, the Foundation of business discipline and the heart for the underprivileged for inside PBSP is benchmark for social development and corporate social responsibility here in the Philippines and abroad.

PBSP in the Visayas

PBSP's poverty reduction efforts in the Visayas accelerated in 1968 with the establishment of the Visayas Regional Office (CCO-Cebu) to facilitate the Area Manpower Skills and Employment Program (PEP), which began as a partnership between PBSP, the Cebu City government and the business sector. The Central Cebu watershed in the Mihalcoh, is home to many of Cebu's poor households. The housing communities had very low income due to lack of new farming methodologies, degradation of the environment, and very low productivity.

Equipped with livelihood improvement and environmental rehabilitation, the AEP became a landmark for PBSP's future poverty reduction programs and a model for direct business sector involvement in social development. Mihalcoh communities were organized into cooperatives and peoples organizations, and trainings on value formation, technologies were taught to the farmers. Meanwhile, employee volunteers and business sponsors provided medical services and capability building support. They also participated in reforesting of 3,000 hectares in the Mihalcoh to help continuous flow of water in Metro Cebu.

At present, PBSP manages five poverty reduction programs in Bohol, Cebu and Samar. Collectively, these programs have improved the lives of 23,911 households. Other forms of social development assistance include livelihood improvement, capability building, holistic engagement of various stakeholders, and provision of basic services such as health and education.

Poverty reduction programs

In Metro Cebu, PBSP has general interest with its workforce and education programs. Its convergence for demand for water and support facilities for relocated and displaced but skilled urban workers, PBSP strengthened 10 people's cooperatives that employ 6,250 industrious. And to address the mismatch between the needs of the industry and the quality of graduates, PBSP formed the Coalition for Better Education to improve the education environment, and assisted two Science and Technology Education Centers, which are specialized high schools that produce employable graduates.

In Cebu Mihalcoh, PBSP secures the gains enjoyed in the earlier AEP by reaching out to other barangays, introducing solid waste management, developing alternative livelihood projects, and widening the swath of demonstration lands that are to be reforested.

In Olango Island, Cebu and Maqueda Bay, Samar, poverty incidences are high because illegal fishing activities have severely depleted the coastal and marine resources, which are primarily the people's source of livelihood. There are efforts to save Olango through the rehabilitation of mangrove sites, formation of coastal resource management councils, engagement in alternative livelihood activities such as seaweed farming and eco-tourism, provision of basic services like water, sanitation and toilets, and introduction of family health care centers. While in Samar, PBSP helps the Coastal and Marine Technology Testing and Training Center to work and provide fisherfolk and farmers alternative livelihoods, such as nurturing high-value fish species to augment their income.

Finally, in Bohol, the efforts to reconstruct post-farmers to farmer entrepreneurs have expanded to eight new barangays in the northern part of the province, in addition to 22 assisted barangays.

Promoting MSEs

Cognizant of the significant role played by the micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in the local economy, the Corporate Networking for Small and Cebu, CNTD-Facilitates the matching of MSEs in need of advisory services with experts who are either businessmen or professionals, employed or retired. The arrangement can be likened to taking a business consultant to solve specific problems in certain areas of the business. But in CNEP's case, these experts provide their time and expertise to MSEs for free.

Capitalizing on the business sector's social responsibility

PBSP currently has 211 member corporate individuals, 35 of which are from the Visayas. And this month, eight more companies joined increasing the region's total membership to 43. It's effort capitalizes and encourage the Visayan business to intensify its poverty reduction efforts. Its United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were introduced to its local business leaders in November 2005. It was the first Summer and the MDGs forum outside Metro Manila and they have formed them seen four Business and the MDGs channel for poverty reduction, education, health and the environment. It is their immediate response to participate in the global challenge of eradicating poverty and worst forms of human deprivation by 2015.

Way forward

In the succeeding years, PBSP Visayas will be, more than ever, relentless in social-investing for wide impacts of poverty reduction and leadership in corporate social responsibility. Socially responsible Visayan business will translate to more classroom and learning resource centers built, more sustainable jobs generated, stronger self-sustaining agricultural and fishing communities, and protected upland, urban and marine ecosystems. The 35-year legacy of this foundation's corporate social responsibility will continue to provide inspiration to PBSP forever many more to the pursuit of its social development goals. Moreover, the wisdom of 35 years of pioneering social development work in the Visayas shall harness more communities to their maximum potential productivity and self-reliance.

Message

Greetings to the Philippine Executive Committee, member companies, management and staff of the Philippine Business for Social Progress on the occasion of its 18th Visayas Annual Membership Meeting with the theme, "PBSP Magsa at 18: Leading Corporate Citizenship," as the basis of its 35th year.

I also extend my warmest regard and appreciation for PBSP's solid reputation for Corporate Social Responsibility, which has significantly contributed in easing poverty in the country.

In the Visayas, PBSP has remained true to its mission of reducing poverty through the creation of self-reliant communities in the provinces of Bohol, Cebu, Negros and Samar. Through its leadership and commitment, the quality of life in these areas has markedly improved.

Yet in the Government acknowledge that we cannot fight poverty alone. We need strong allies, like the PBSP, who have been resilient in bringing about meaningful change for the Filipinos. The PBSP's programs on sustainable livelihood opportunities, promotion of business consistency, accessibility of responsive education for the children and the youth, and the availability of basic social services have inspired much optimism and hope in the regions it represents.

With the directions set under the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Philippine Government and the business sector are one with the rest of the world in reducing poverty and eliminating the worst of human deprivation by 2015. I am grateful that the PBSP continues to accompany us in this endeavor.

Together, let us continue building a prosperous Philippine society. But we only look forward to a better tomorrow for our people.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

Ensuring the continuous flow of water for *Metro Cebu*

A WATERSHED IS A NATURAL land formation consisting of mountain ranges, forestlands, lowlands and coastal areas that catch rainwater essential for household and industrial use. The 34,100-hectare Central Cebu Protected Landscape, site of PBSP's Cebu Watershed Management Program, is the source of Metro Cebu's water supply that is protection and conservation is essential in realizing Metro Cebu's long-term development goals.

Ideally, 54 percent of the whole watershed should be forested to ensure continuous flow of water to support the growing population. At present, less than 10 percent of the Central Cebu watersheds are forested due to generations of unregulated cutting down of trees. PBSP's partnerships with the business sector, government, donor agencies and peoples' organizations resulted in the reforestation of 3,000 hectares in Central Cebu's watersheds.

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Senga: Coup odds 'very low'

By TJ Burgonio and Norman Bordadora

GEN. HERMOGENO SENGA, CHIEF OF STAFF of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, yesterday ruled out speculations that a coup d'état was in the offing after explosions rocked Malacañang's grounds and a street in Makati City on Monday.

"It's very low, very low," Senga said when asked by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile about the probability of a coup during his confirmation hearing before the Commission on Appointments at the Senate.

He said he based on the Presidential Security Group's report that the explosion at Malacañang was caused by combustible material thrown in a garbage can that was "probably ignited by a cigarette."

"It appears to be the case," he said.

The blast occurred in front of the Radio and Television Malacañang (RTVM) office in ground zero.

An hour later, an explosion at Jaime Cardinal Sin Avenue in Barangay Pio del Pilar in Makati City, injuring a guard.

Members of the opposition in the House of Representatives expressed serious doubts about Malacañang's claim that paint thinner had caused the explosion.

Breach of security

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said Malacañang should look into the serious breach of security when President Macapagal-Arroyo herself was inside the Palace.

"Even the toss of garbage in Forbes (a dump in Quezon City) don't explode that way when some it would bodily blowup!" Escudero said in an interview during the cabinet meeting the other theory of "chemical combustion."

Cardin Rep. Gilbert Remulla, another member of the House minority, said that whether it was a bomb or paint thinner that caused the explosion it was a breach of security.

"It's a big no-no the laws of the [memberS] of the PSG either way," Remulla said.

After listening to Senga, Enrile said he was surprised that in the history of military history, this was the only time a coup d'état was being "announced," instead of being kept under wraps under the "Hindu principle of caution."

"People not talk about it, if they strike you will be shot by your snipers. But here in this country people are talking about coup d'état and the media echo. They announce it on the radio," the former defense minister commented.

"It's funny. It's like a joke to announce a coup d'état over the radio."

Threat reduced

After the hearing, Senga, whose promotion to the rank of lieutenant general was recommended by the Commission on Appointments (CA) on February 15, said it was unfortunate that some groups were blaming the coup rumors.

"There are several groups that are trying to demobilize [the government]. What we're doing is [that said to Bush ca- publican I'm sorry] a coup]. They have the intentions, but we have to check whether they're capable of doing it," he told reporters.

Senga declared that the capture of 1st Lt. Lieutenant Ens Anas, one of four Magdalo officers who escaped from their detention in January, led to a very reduced the threat of destabilization against the government. (See story on Page A2.)

HOT SEAT: AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga weighs it out during his confirmation hearing conducted by the Commission on Appointments and the defense committee at the Senate. EV VELOS

"Definitely, that (capture) will be a big blow to those managing to destabilize the situation," he said.

Senga said the military was also investigating the existence of the Young Officers Union of the New Generation and Sabanan 420, which claimed they were mounting a series of "explosive scenarios" until Presidential Security Group (PSG) personnel defused a suspected bomb.

"We are looking to, these matters to see can establish what's the truth," he said.

Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Army chief, however, said as far as he is sure that these two groups were bogus. "I think they're fake. They're nothing but a cry [also] of individuals with a paper and a pen," he said.

Senga, for his part, advised the media to focus discussing rebel during "such such groups.

"There's a lot of propaganda, rhetoric, destabilization going around, he said.

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The way it was: Confetti to rain on Ayala Avenue

It's on page A1

editors who were among those who fought Ferdinand Marcos's strongman rule will return to the streets to "remember" the Makati rallies.

"The rallies in Makati brought together all sectors of society and could be considered the spur for the Edsa 1986 revolution," Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said in a statement.

The protest actions, marked by thousands of rallies (rather), were mounted by broad opposition groups in the wake of the assassination of Senator "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. on Aug. 21, 1983.

To indelibly relive the Makati rallies, City Hall said the Edsa effort would serve as "a reminder for present-day who were active in the anti-Marcos struggle" and as "a tribute to figures and other martyrs of the anti-dictatorship movement."

The Makati City council had earlier passed its ordinance declaring Feb. 22-25 of every year a time "for celebrating the spirit of Edsa 1986."

Cory et al.

Participants are to gather at around 2 p.m. at the intersection of Gil Puyat and Ayala Avenues in Makati and push toward the Ayala Avenue-Paseo de Roxas intersection to lay a wreath at the Ninoy Aquino monument.

Among those expected to attend are reporters with, former President Corazon Aquino, who was swept to power by Edsa I.

Also invited to take part in the memorial are human rights lawyers during the Marcos regime and members of the August Twenty One Movement (Atom) led by Aquino's brother, Makati Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino.

"Makati is building a simple tribute ... If we try to remind the people that the spirit of Edsa 1986 is still alive, and must be kept alive for future generations," said Binay, himself a famous rights lawyer during martial rule.

Cautious Palace

Binay extolled Malacañang's "iron fist" commemoration of Edsa I, noting that despite every-thousand malacañang of President Macapagal-Arroyo appeared to be cautious and "clearly does not want to provide the opportunity for a large gathering of people, including many provocateurs who are not supportive of it."

"I find it rather disconcerting that on the 20th year of Edsa 1986, the national leadership has chosen to do the unforgettable. Relegate the celebration of one of our proudest moments as a people to a low-key event, not even bothering a resolution day celebration of such," Binay said.

According to the program organized by the socially mobilized Edsa People Power Commission, Mr. Arroyo will lay a wreath tomorrow at the Liliangan ng mga Bayani in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

Mr. Arroyo herself was installed in Malacañang in 2001 through Edsa II, which ousted her predecessor, President Joseph Estrada.

Last year, the renewed cause demands in major power arenas in Makati, which were mounted by a broad opposition that believed she had rigged the May 2004 presidential elections.

Since the allegations of poll fraud were raised, Mr. Arroyo has lost the support of her former allies, including former President Aquino.

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Lower film taxes get GMA nod

By Philip C. Tubeza

TO SAVE THE MORIBUND LOCAL MOVIE industry, Malacañang has finally agreed to support a proposed bill reducing the amusement tax, from Batman "Bong" Revilla Jr. said yesterday.

Revilla said President Macapagal-Arroyo on Monday committed to certify as a priority measure Senate Bill No. 2316, which calls for the reduction of the amusement tax from 30 percent to 10 percent.

He said the bill, which he co-authored with fellow actors Senators Lito Lapid and Jinggoy Estrada, would give the film industry "the breather it so needed."

"Year after year, we see less and less Filipino movies being produced because nobody wants to gamble anymore. Producers don't want to incur heavy losses but with the passage of this bill, we can again look at a revitalized industry," Revilla said.

Revilla got Mrs. Arroyo's commitment after he and key industry players met with her for two hours.

He said they appealed to the President to help reduce the taxes imposed on the industry and to stem intellectual piracy, the "two main culprits for the continuous upturned taxes," they said.

Currently the movie industry "is suffering from the collection of two business taxes" imposed by the national and local governments, Revilla said.

Local government units collect an amusement tax on theater admission tickets at the top rate of 30 percent. With the value-added tax, the theaters of Internal Revenue took another 10 percent, he said, resulting in total taxes of 40 percent.

Local producers complained this was "unjust and confiscatory," he said.

Revilla and movie industry leaders, for their part, also vowed to pool their resources to curb filmpiracy.

He said the President directed the Intellectual Property Office, the Optical Media Board (OMB) and other agencies concerned to combine and strengthen their forces in an anti-piracy.

In addition, Revilla said he has learned a truce between actors Lea Salonga and Fifa Mascardo who had quarreled over the proceeds of the Bitoy Manila Film Festival (MMFF).

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, February 22, 2006
Chair of Peter, Apostle

1st Reading: 1 Pt 5:1-4
Gospel: Mt 16:13-19

Jesus came to Caesarea Philippi. He asked his disciples, "What do people say of the Son of Man? Who do they say I am?" They said, "For some of them you are John the Baptist, for others Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Jesus asked them, "But you, who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "It is well for you, Simon Bedeus, for it is not flesh or blood that has revealed this to you but my Father in heaven.

"And now I say to you: You are Peter (or Rock) and on this rock I will build my Church, and never will the powers of death overcome it.

"I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and what you unbind on earth shall be unbound in heaven."

Commentary

The leaders/teacher of Jesus' Church is to be an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ, hoping to share his glory too. It is not being old but being steeped in suffering and serving, for others as a shepherd does his/her sheep, graciously and looking by example that makes for one who keeps the Church in imitation of even the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. Nothing can overpower the Church but those who bind and loose who for how must be subject to the Rather of all standing in the world, but also against it—what it must do or—to be true to the crucified Christ.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

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Cheaper medicine just as good, says gov't importer

DRAF boss says necessarily mean inferior.

Robert Pagdanganan, president of the government-owned Philippine Drug Retailing Corp., which imports inexpensive drugs, said he wanted to debunk the myth that lower-priced drugs were ineffective.

Generic drugs, he said, mark the same as branded ones.

"Generics are as efficacious and safe as branded medicine," Pagdanganan told the Philippine Senate hearing.

He said generic drugs were manufactured using the same guidelines as the more expensive ones.

He said he believed the myth about cheap medicines was being spread by the branded drug manufacturers.

He said the drugs imported by the PITC were checked thoroughly by the Bureau of Food and Drugs.

Perception

Pagdanganan said the attention to the cheaper imported medicine may also have something to do with Filipinos' negative perception of India.

He said India was a highly progressive country and the medicines it manufactured were up to par.

The PITC imported medicines were available in the "Jeridu ng Bayan" drugstores.

Another "pharmacy-assisted outfit" that Pagdanganan described was the Botika ng Barangay.

He said that, as the economy, if the drug companies brought down their prices, their sales would increase.

He said many Filipinos today were not buying medicines because of the high cost.

3rd myth

The PITC president also enumerated a third myth that said drug companies had to raise their prices to recover research and development costs.

He said a UN study showed that the cost of research and development was so high as the companies claimed.

Pagdanganan said it was important to debunk the myths because they hindered Filipinos' access to affordable medicine. The move was also part of the PITC's mission to bring lower-priced medicine to Filipinos, he said.

He said the prices of medicines in the country were among the highest in the world.

He cited the pain reliever Biogesic, for instance, which costs P2.83 to P6.50 in the Philippines but sells for P2.61 in India and P1.30 in Pakistan.

He said medicine prices in the country were controlled by a cartel of pharmaceutical companies and a drug chain, which was why they were high.

He said the PITC, at first in collaboration with the Botika ng Bayan, where the medicine are down 30 percent cheaper than in the regular drugstores.

Botika ng Bayan branches number over 1,000 and the PITC is aiming to increase the to 2,500 this year, he said. (with JC Salomon in Manila)

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The WORLD

Edna Lorraine B. Suarez

Europe battles to calm bird flu fears

BRUSSELS—EU FARM MINISTERS TRIED MONDAY TO CALM consumer fears that bird flu would spread to the bloc's poultry, as Nigeria found the potentially lethal virus in three new states and the capital Abuja.

While no poultry has been struck by the disease in the European Union, most sales to the industry have plunged 70 percent in Italy, to lose 40 percent in Greece, 15 percent in France and 10 percent in Portugal.

France, Europe's top poultry producer, was on a high state of alert after becoming the sixth EU country to confirm a case of the highly pathogenic strain of H5N1 which can kill humans.

"We must not give in to panic," said Swiss's an Agriculture Minister Josef Prodi, whose country holds the EU's rotating presidency. "The disease remains confined to wild birds."

While the virus has infected chickens on the EU's doorstep in Ukraine and Romania, outbreaks in Bulgaria as well as EU states Italy, France, Greece, Austria, Germany and Slovenia have only hit wild birds like swans and ducks.

"There is no reason for European citizens not to consume poultry meat and poultry products," EU health commissioner Markos Kyprianou added.

"We have to keep in mind that we are talking about an animal disease. It's not a human disease," he said. "It's a virus that is difficult to transmit to humans."

More than 90 people have died from bird flu in China, Southeast Asia, Iraq and mainland Turkey since 2003 after contracting the H5N1 virus from infected poultry.

While the virus cannot currently be passed between humans, experts fear that it could mutate if it were to mix with common flu genes and spark a world-wide pandemic that could kill millions of people.

No human infections have been reported in Europe.

In an effort to limit the spread to poultry, Germany sent 200 soldiers to the Baltic Sea island of Rügen, where the virus first broke out last week, to help army specialists pick up dead birds.

Cars travelling to or from Rügen, a popular holiday destination which is joined to the mainland by a bridge, had to drive through disinfectant baths.

"The main goal is to stop the spread to domestic animals," a government spokesperson said.

Germany has joined Denmark, France, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Slovenia in ordering all poultry to be shut indoors.

France's first case of the more dangerous form of H5N1 was confirmed on Saturday in a wild duck found dead near the central eastern city of Lyon.

The virus was also found in Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Ukraine and Russia.

Bosnia, meanwhile, ordered the slaughter of nearly 4,500 poultry after additional tests confirmed wild swans in a central region (H5 virus.

Health ministers in Albania banned 8,000 Scandinavian tourists cancelled holidays to Romanian seaside resorts after bird flu outbreaks along the Black Sea. Germany tourists operator TUI said.

In Nigeria, a sprawling country of 36 states that was the first in Africa to confirm the presence of H5N1, the authorities confirmed that bird flu had now been found in six states plus the capital.

"To-date, there are six states: Kano, Kaduna, Plateau, Bauchi, Kwara and Zamfara and the federal Capital Territory," Information Minister Frank Nweke told reporters in Abuja. AFP

A MAN is surrounded by a sea of pigeons, Feb. 20 in Paris, France a day before the first human case of bird flu in the city was confirmed. Authorities have since culled around 12,000 birds, after the country confirmed its first cases of the deadly strain of the virus last Feb. 11. AFP

Afghan cartoon protesters threaten to join al-Qaida

ISLAMABAD, AFGHANISTAN—Hundreds of Afghan students shouted support on Monday for Osama bin Laden and threatened to join al-Qaida during a protest against caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad.

Speaking after a weekend of deadly riots in Nigeria and Libya, Pope Benedict said the world's religions and their symbols had to be respected but warned such protests were wrong.

However, Pakistan's main Islamist alliance vowed to broaden its campaign against the cartoons with protests targeted at the US and Pakistan's president.

The protests in the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad passed off largely without violence. But those gathered in the university campus chanted "Death to Denmark," "Death to America" and "Death to France," it witnesses said.

They also showed support for al-Qaida leaders Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahri.

Shouting "Death to Russia," they denounced President Hamid Karzai, then the countries of Denmark, the United States and France and urged their forces from Afghanistan.

"If they abuse the Prophet of Islam again we will all become al-Qaida," the students decided.

Two weeks ago in Afghanistan, at least four people were killed in several days of protests over the cartoons but violent demonstrations there have largely petered out.

The cartoons, published in a Danish newspaper last year and reprinted in European papers, were rejected worldwide by Muslims who believe it is blasphemous to depict the Prophet.

In a speech to the new Moroccan ambassador in the Vatican, the Pope said: "In order to prevent peace and understanding between peoples and mankind it is both vital and urgent that religions and their symbols are respected and that believers are not the object of provocations that wound their religious feelings."

"However, intolerance and violence can never be justified as a response to any offense, because it is a response that is incompatible with the sacred principles of religion," he added.

Addressing an Arab League summit in Egypt, League chief Amr Moussa said: "We don't want a clash of civilizations. We don't want a misunderstanding with the West. What we want is a dialogue between our two civilizations." Reuters

WORLDBRIEFS

65 Mexican miners trapped

SAN JUAN DE SABINAS, Mexico—Hundreds of survivors gathered on Monday for 65 Mexican miners trapped underground by a blast at a coal mine, where emergency workers wielding only picks and shovels struggled to dig through to the men. Family members who were gathered at the mine in the northern state of Coahuila grew increasingly desperate, screaming at rescuers for more machinery to help dig through the rubble. "We don't want a dead son," one father shouted. "They don't want to tell us anything." A rescue team got within 100 meters of where two men had been working on a conveyor belt when Sunday's gas explosion occurred, but poor ventilation and the risk of sparks hampered efforts to clear them. Rescuers were using only hand tools for fear of sparking another blast. Reuters

33 Iraqis killed in attack

BAGHDAD—At least 33 Iraqis were killed and 60 wounded Monday in a slew of attacks, including a suicide bombing in which 17 commuters lured to a bomb on a Baghdad minibus in a Shiite neighborhood of northern Baghdad, security officials said. Another 13 Iraqis were reported the victims of a blackmail hoax to extract ransom from someone while eight wounded civilians were rushed to hospital. In another bombing, 3 Friday laborers waiting to be hired for work were hurt in central Baghdad, an interior ministry official said. The carnage could have been worse as police discovered a nearby car packed with explosives which had failed to go off. "I was blown back and everything was flying around me," said Ammar Jabbar Rahim, 28, who was wounded in the arm and back in his legs. AFP

Militants strike Nigerian oil targets anew

WARRI, Nigeria—Nigerian militants blew up crude pipelines early Tuesday, wounded one Monday, ratcheting a campaign of sabotage in the world's eighth largest oil exporter which has already cut supplies by a fifth. Two militants, who are holding nine foreign hostages, released by present Papua Delta State from taking the damaged Nembe-Soku-Tebidaba pipeline, which accounts for 14 percent of Nigerian exports, and threatened an even more devastating series of attacks on the whole region. "Shell Nigeria can confirm that Nembe-Tebidaba pipeline in the Trans-Ramos complex was destroyed in fresh attacks early this morning. Also an abandoned house local in the area was crude," Shell said in a statement. No one was immediately available for further comment. Reuters

Austrian court jails British historian

VIENNA—Right-wing British historian David Irving was sentenced to three years in prison by an Austrian court Monday for denying the Holocaust 11 years ago, despite his claim to have changed his views. Irving, 67, had pleaded guilty at the start of three-day charge dating from 1989 to denying the Holocaust of European Jewry but insisted that he no longer questioned the existence of gas chambers at the Nazis' Auschwitz concentration camp. Irving, a controversial figure who has had numerous exhibitions of his paintings in Europe, was arrested on November 11 last year on a warrant issued by Austrian authorities. Reuters correspondent Sophie Walker said: "I'm very shocked and I'm going to appeal," But chief judge Peter Lehrbrey said in his final decision that Irving's "confession" of changing his mind "did not have any mitigating effect." AFP

Thaksin's key allies urge him to resign

BANGKOK—LAWMAKERS FROM THAI Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's ruling party on Tuesday urged their embattled boss to quit, breaking ranks for the first time amid escalating calls for his resignation.

Thaksin said he would dissolve parliament and hold new elections if political pressures on him become too strong. But that he will not resign, the government spokesman said Monday.

Anti-Thaksin sentiment stepped up another notch after Thaksin's brother-in-law, Thaksin's most senior military-backer, called for Thaksin to step down, saying Monday that he "no longer has the legitimacy to run the country."

Thaksin has come under heavy fire over his family's 73.3 billion baht ($1.9 billion) sale of its controlling stake in telecom giant Shin Corp. to Singapore's state-owned investment company.

Critics accuse him of corruption, abuse of power and manipulation of tax laws.

Four members of parliament from Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai party on Tuesday joined a growing chorus of his opponents.

"I want to urge Thaksin to make a sacrifice by stepping for the sake of nation," said Uraiwan Thapsuang, a lawmaker from Bangkok. "We have not forgotten since the day that he sold Shin Corp. to Temasek under dubious circumstances."

Adit Intarasombat, a member of parliament from Khon Kaen province, pressed for the lawmakers to step aside for a new party leader. "We should resign and appoint one of our lawmakers to replace him."

Thai Rak Thai lawmakers hoped Pongpanu and Suthichai Jaemsithum took conflict talks, saying their party it is impossible that if Thaksin dissolved parliament, it would be unlikely to win a new election.

Political analyst Joseph Mosaregani of Chulalongkorn University said the Thai Rak Thai lawmaker's opposition shows disunity within the party.

"He has been screamed by his opponents ... he has to dissolve the parliament or quit, otherwise the political tension will lead to violence," Joseph said.

Another anti-Thaksin protest leaders is expected to be the largest yet, due in part to the

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Abbas, Hamas hold talks on new gov't

GAZA—PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT MAHmoud Abbas, reminding Hamas of his vision of peace with Israel, told its leaders in talks on Monday he would appoint the militant group's choice for prime minister to form the new government.

"The president will construct [Tuesday] at 6 p.m. to give Ismail Haniyeh to give him the official accreditation letter to form the government," said Nabil Abu Rdainah, a senior Abbas adviser.

"He will clarify in the letter a number of issues that will need to be discussed and agreed upon," Abu Rdainah said, noting Abbas repeated to Hamas leaders the "political vision" he spelled out in a speech to parliament on Saturday.

In his address to the Hamas-led legislature, Abbas appealed to a future Hamas government to recognize past interim peace accords and commit itself to pursuing statehood through talks.

Hamas, an Islamic group dedicated to the destruction of the Jewish state, crushed Abbas' long-dominant Fatah faction in a Jan. 25 election on a platform of ousting rule corruption in the Palestinian Authority.

Asked what would happen if Hamas, which on Saturday rejected Abbas' peace appeal, failed to agree more guidelines with him, Abu Rdainah said: "We have to be patient. We hope the new government will continue the path of the old one."

Palestinian political analysts have predicted a constitutional crisis if Abbas and Hamas do not reach consensus quickly. —*Reuters*

Space offered as alternative site for burial

CAPE CANAVERAL—SCOTTY WILL BE buried this space—for burial up—and Earth is returning for his third flight.

The planned launch sometime in March of a rocket carrying the ashes of actor James Doohan, who played chief engineer Montgomery Scott on "Star Trek," and Mercury program astronaut Gordon Cooper will give a fitting send-off to two men who helped popularize human space exploration.

The craft also will hold the ashes of 148 others, including a telephone technician, a nurse and a police officer.

Their families paid $995 to $1,300 for the flight, being coordinated by one of a handful of growing businesses hoping to give a space experience to the common people.

"It broadens the market, which is important to us because our whole business plan is about getting more people access to space," said Charles Miller of Space Services Inc. of Houston, which is sponsoring the ashes flight. "Space needs to be affordable for all to come over."

Along with those services, space tourism businesses hope to send customers into suborbital space at a cost of $25,000 to $250,000 a person, far less than the $20 million businessman Lawrence Ghez paid Russia last fall for a ride to the International Space Station. Richard Branson's company Virgin Galactic already has 400 people who have paid $200,000 apiece for flights, which the company has said it hopes to begin in 2008.

Esther Dyson knew last 19-year-old daughter would have loved the idea of having her ashes sent into space. But her mother died in 2003 from complications of Hodgkin's lymphoma.

"She would have said 'It's about time, Mom, rather than keeping my ashes around the house,'" said Esther Mary of Phoenix. *AP*

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Pure terrorism

EDITORIAL

MERE MINUTES AFTER THE EXPLOSION—"like loud to a 21-gun salute," Palace employees said (and they should know whereof they speak when making such noise comparisons)—startled Malacañang employees, people began to take astounding leaps of faith. Rep. Gov. Dolfo Rongit, chief of the Presidential Security Group, while trying to moderate his words, proposed the theory that a "chemical contamination" had occurred, although not enough time had passed to justify even that rather pat conclusion. The President's Chief of Staff Michael Defensor was more curt, unreservedly pointing the finger at enemies of the administration, although he had to backpedal on his conclusions later on.

Within an equally-short period of time, reporters began to receive a faxed statement from the Young Officers Union of the New Generation (YOUNG) and a brand-new entity calling itself the Bolivarian AFP, stating that they had "started today a series of explosive protest activities that will continue and even escalate until Gloria Arroyo leaves the Presidency of the Philippines and departs Malacañang Palace."

YOUNG, it turns out, is a group that should not be confused for another group with the same acronym: Young Officers Union of the new generation (YOUng), which has been losing murderous ire to the press signed by a "Lt. Col. Armenio Abraham," obviously a pseudonym. Reporters noticed that the threatening press release coming from YOUNG was unsigned.

To add to the confusion, on the same day, someone claiming to be Lt. Lieutenant San Juan, one of the four Magdalo rebel officers who escaped military detention last month, was interviewed over DMS radio. This person claimed military rebels would be "taking action before the end of February."

Yesterday San Juan was apprehended in Batangas. The Armed Forces said he was arrested at around 9:45 a.m., and yet, San Juan was heard over the radio, at around 7 a.m., issuing dire warnings, including an announcement that rebels would undertake something dramatic on Friday, and that residents near Malacañang should leave the place for their own safety.

The scam total of all these developments is a dangerous tangle of conflicting claims: the government has, on one hand, a well-running military officer (Rongit) eager to keep things calm, but at the expense of doing a thorough checking of the facts, and on the other hand, a top Palace official leaping to bloodcurdling conclusions at the drop of a hat. Then there is a group operating under an acronym, YOUNG, identical to a rebel group (YOUng), which suggests malicious plagiarism. And there is a person calling the media, speaking illogically but demonstrably, pretending to be an escaped marksman (San Juan), while the circumstances surrounding the real San Juan's capture strongly suggest it couldn't have been him saying those impractical and farcically illogical things over radio.

So what does the public know? It knows that a mysterious clutch bag was discovered in the Philippine Military Academy grandstand last Saturday, a disturbing development after government revealed what it claimed to be a plot to assassinate and even kidnap, or kill, President Macapagal-Arroyo. A few days later, a loud but not lethal explosion rocked the Palace, and the presidential guards had an inconclusive explanation on hand even as they were still gathering up the debris, while the President's diary ego curled off a list of suspects. The media were bombarded with blasts quoting misleading acronyms, the airwaves began carrying a voice with a spurious claim to identity, and the flaws and the voice both behaved in a manner too incredible even for committed pseudoists: mixing times and places for their actions.

One thing is sure: terrorism is afoot. And it is terrorism in its purest form, using violence—or the threat of it—to pursue a particular political objective aimed at a civilian target. A dangerous game is under way, and half of the danger lies in the fact that at this point, no one can say with certainty whether this isn't all a plot hatched by a government eager to provide the pretext for a state of emergency. Or innumerable opponents of the government eager to provoke a backlash. Or even perhaps, simply a military faction that intends to pursue revolution by terrorizing the civilian population.

Now is the time to pass a total log ban bill

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE GOVERNMENT IS BEAMBARDING THE people into believing that the landslide in Southern Leyte was caused by heavy rains and not by deforestation, even repeatedly coming out with figures saying that the rainfall in the mountain from Oct. 1 to 16 measured 488 mm. Watchers compared with the monthly average of June (377 mm), January (365 mm) and March (347 mm) was no rain gauge on that mountain. The propaganda is obviously to absolve the government of negligence for allowing logging in the area.

Who are they kidding? The customers, the Philippines have been drenched with heavy rains at the beginning of every rainy season—what we call the "habagat season," nine days and nine nights of continuous rains, but there were no landslides of the magnitude we are now having. Because there was still had the forests that held the soil together. Now we have landslides and floods everywhere because the forests have been cut down by logging, both legal and illegal, and by kaingineros. Without trees, there are no more roots to hold the soil together and the rains wash them down the mountains and valleys and carry it up the water like flowers, the water geshes down in flood like landslide.

The landslides became frequent only when Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo became President, and especially when she appointed Mike Defensor as secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Katharina Ann Serva of the Citizens Disaster Response Center (CDRC) noted a rising frequency in disasters (440 last year) during the last decade. I think the biggest disaster was when GMA became President.

There is no better proof of the role of log ging in the landslides and floods than in the recent disasters in Quezon and Aurora and, earlier, in Ormoc, when the mud and floodwaters that buried the villages below carried with them thousands of logs cut by illegal loggers.

The proposal to impose a two years ban on log ging in the mountains above 18 percent, the municipality where new landslides brought death and destruction in Barangay Guinsaugon and wiped it off the map, Ormoc. The loggers have already left because there are no more trees to cut. Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. told the Kapihan sa Manila Sun Monday the other guests were Sen. Alfredo Lim and Rep. Robert "Dodot" Jaworski Jr.) that in 1986 or 1987, 43 farmers meeting in a chapel in the neighboring barangay of Sogod to discuss how to fight the loggers in the mountains, were massacred by armed men believed to be goons of the logging company. There was only one survivor but no suspects have been arrested until now.

Both the Southern Leyte tragedy and that of Ormoc and Quezon, there is no better time to pass legislation for a total log ban. Pimentel is resigned that he finds a left rallying for a total log ban when he first became a senator. The bill was passed by both the Senate and the House of Representatives, but during the conference committee meeting to reconcile the two versions, the House counterpart did not show up and so the bill was not passed for the plenary until Congress adjourned.

That is not surprising. Many members of Congress were beggars or protectors of loggers. Some prominent political families in Bicolandia, like the Antoninos, the Alfonsechos and the Pintas, limited their political careers and wealth derived from logging. Most of their former logging concessions (either home provinces are held until now although their logging contracts with the government were denied them to reforest their concessions.) So there can no expect members of Congress to pass legislation for a total log ban?

Another law that should be passed is one separating the Department of Environment from the Department of Natural Resources. The present DENR has two contradictory functions: one, to preserve the environment, and the other, to exploit the natural resources. You can't do both effectively at the same time because they cancel out each other. The Department of Environment should rank higher than the Department of Natural Resources, even higher than the Environmental Protection Agency of the United States which is under the Office of the President because it can be influenced by the president who, in turn, can be influenced by politicians and businessmen. It should also be an independent constitutional body with autonomy budget appropriations.

A resident of a neighboring barangay that escaped the fate of Guinsaugon cursed that they were spared because a white lady appeared to her in her dream and told her that she was going to happen. She said several other people saw the lady. She said the whole barangay prayed the rosary and that probably saved them.

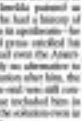
The story could be true or false, but I am sure that many of us would like to believe in Filipinos are suckers for "miracle" stories. Which is probably why the priest in the church I went to last Tuesday chose as the subject of his sermon. He said God was trying to tell us something or punishing us and recalled the story in the Bible in which God punished the people for their sins, such as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the great flood that killed everything and everybody except the humans and animals in Noah's Ark, and the plague that afflicted Pharaoh's Egypt because he wouldn't let the Israelites go.

"Could God be punishing us because our President wouldn't let go?" he asked, and the people snickered. "Maybe the disasters will stop when she steps down."

"Abraham was willing to sacrifice his own son to please God," he continued. "Why can't she sacrifice Malacañang to save her people?"

When will they ever learn?

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

TWO THINGS I REMEMBER BEFORE AND after Marcos fell.

The first is that the talk in the years before Edsa was about succession. The question everyone was asking then (as now) was: Just who is going to succeed Marcos? Or who is the successor to Marcos?

At the time, no one seemed to fit the bill. Marcos achieved this dominion of all by systematically avoiding the field of potential rivals and successors. Fearing the military in particular—the Fundamentals memoir of his own making—he held out to the generals who were loyal to him well past their retirement age. A psychic that once met relishes in internal contradictions in the "AFP ang pinuno" blurb of the Times's mobility of their younger counterparts, which made for a lot of grumbling in the ranks.

Among his own people in government, he practiced divide and rule, allowing, indeed encouraging, bickering among them. Prodigies were shifted. Juan Ponce Enrile, the late hatred boy at the start of martial law, among them. Last we forgot, Enrile, like Marcos himself, was not a soldier, notwithstanding that he was the martial law minister of defense and struck martial poses—among others, toting a Colt .45 during his first press conference. Marcos left a soldier (Fabian Ver) in charge of the military, notwithstanding that he provided zero intelligence, relied on the myth of his fake guerrilla exploits and fake medals. Both he and his wife were lawyers, and ostensibly clever ones.

The opposition Marcos "allowed" to exist was small help from the muzzled press. And at the time at least (in retrospect), the opposition seemed to live up to the caricature. Sharon Bluel complaining Gary's and Steel's IQ, political and otherwise, to his and asking the camera if their pictures should be taken. Or Salvador Laurel's impression of Ver. To offset the political coolness in the United States—"weak combination," in reference to their presumably indulgent lifestyle, a term that stuck. And, completely reminiscent of today, he lumped on the fact that they couldn't get their act together, assuming such acts of them of opting power for himself.

Marcos achieved the illusion, secondly, by self-advertisement. Bit of course were already printed himself—Edith would go past him in that respect ("nada ebong plates, mirror ebry nada along dressers, mirror also...") Mary have no plans, I do; they have no direction, I do—but he never passed up the chance to appreciate himself. He had an entire propaganda apparatus for the purpose. He (or Imelda) birthed the world in myth, having himself and Imelda portrayed as Malakas and Maganda, and he had a history of fabrication carried with him as an apothecary—he was in theory. The muzzled press extolled his virtues on a daily basis. He had over the Americans believing there was truly no alternative to him. He was able to head the nations of the Reagan administration till the end—and still convincing enamored pious that included him in the belief that he was part of the solution even in between the source of the problem.

Until Edsa erupted with the subdominoes of Mt. Pinatubo exploding. Marcos seemed destined to "last it" not forever as from a long the time, notwithstanding the corruption and repression that pervaded his regime and the depth of cynicism and despair that gripped the nation.

The second thing I remember was when Marcos fell. With the suddenness of early morning mist dissipating in the sun, quite commingle was the inevitability and formidability of the martial law regime, and indeed of Marcos, an inevitability and formidability that had stood for 14 years. For the martial law history in particular, for whom the only possibility they had ever known was Marcos, it carried with it the shock of revelation. The astonishing thing was not that the martial law regime had finally ended, the astonishing thing was that it had lasted that long.

Indeed, the wonder was not that Marcos had finally been successful, the wonder was that he had not been successful sooner. Marcos, in carrying out

Edsa revisited

ANALYSIS

Armando Doronila

THE FOUR DAYS, FROM FEB. 22 TO 25, 1986, were the shortest four days that changed the course of Philippine history. But 20 years after the Shoah Project Revisionists in Edsa, the number of members that swore with unsung enthusiasm. The official commemoration is muted, and the Aquino administration, which is a beneficiary of Edsa in 2005, has discouraged many public demonstrations in the anniversary of Edsa, fearing perhaps that Edsa is a weapon for partisan change but a double-edged one that can wound its possessors.

The tepid commemoration highlights the one thing that have dimished the original coalition of 1986, in terms of its leading fights have spent separate ways. Former Presidents Corazon Aquino, former Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and vetoed Gen. Fidel Ramos have been daily squabbles in the past 20 years.

Perhaps, we are no worse off than the general coalition that overthrew Ferdinand Marcos in the anniversary triumphs, as did the greater coalition that defeated Nazi Germany in 1945, the Western Allies and the former Soviet Union. While a year after the fall of Berlin, Winston Churchill, in 1946, lamented that "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an iron curtain has descended across the Continent" after communist regimes quasi-seized by Moscow had seized power in the liberated states of Eastern and Central Europe.

The purpose of remembrance of great events, like Edsa, is not to relive the glorious days, which were not welcome to the rebuilding of history, do not forget the struggle of those who were caught in the flood tides of history, so that the tragedies of history will not happen again. Edsa was essentially the culmination of the struggle of the Filipino people to liberate themselves from 14 years of the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos.

This is what the nation is trying to remember today but remembrance seems to evolved by the resurgence of the communists focusing on the Edsa anniversary by holding Edsa-like rallies that are large in their uprising. There is today a coming

reunion of recollections of the First and Second World Wars, shown in documentaries on TV based on black-and-white films. Those films capture reality to the outrage of simulated, lovelike music of people of their respective wars as they marched their lives. There is today a strong revival of distrust and distaste of the players of history embrace whose recollections that reconstruction of history would be incomplete and distorted. That increasingly the line that extends the regions of the past from the present is getting fuzzier, blurring the role of the lens utilized in the trenches.

Despite the official effort to censor the profile of public demonstration in the Edsa memorial, the collection of the unheralded participation in that event cannot any longer be concealed in the rivers. They are coming forward to tell their story.

We have already heard and read two batch of Ramos, Cory Aquino, Enrile, Jaime Cardinal Sin, the little glorious hero, easygoing with their tin can-machine guns doing across their shoulders, some of the people who remained adherents of eternal reasons, and some high-profile politicians in the anti-Marcos movement. But Edsa does not belong to these high-profile actors who have written the history of Edsa from their point of view. Their version of history is only a fragment of history as shaped by them—from the top. We should not forget that Edsa was a human flood of more than a million nameless and faceless people who converged on the areas of what was seized, without expression of rewards, without regard to rank or duty like soldiers and ABCs.

The significant development of the 20th anniversary commemoration is the emergence of recollections by most people who came to the streets and by those known players in the People Power Revolution that shook the world. These recollections are filling the gaps of history. These memoirs are reviving history from the view of the onlookers and non-activists-turn-on the ground.

Edsa belongs to the people. They have written it all. It is the task of historians to copy these memories. So far, during these past 20 years, not evident of history based on the other's recollections, has featured the myth that Edsa represented the capture of People Power by the elite. The members of the young generation who were too in the aftermath of Edsa in February 1986 cannot relate with the intoxicating atmosphere of that moment without being told what drove the masses to join the Edsa movement.

There has been a tendency to highlight selective happenings in the Edsa days as the key factor in causing the massive exile bringing about the collapse of the government of President Joseph Estrada. This interpretation of political change since 1986 seeks to devalue the importance of civil resistance, mass movements and legal, constitutional processes. It is a conservative attitude which to change governments. It favors dependence on constitutional instruments—such as the military—as agents of political change.

An eavesdropper on military maneuvers in the version of Edsa of January seeks to devalue the role held by the military antagonists of the 1986 military mutiny in Camp Aguinaldo that it was the military rebellion that was mainly responsible for the overthrow of the Marcos regime. This interpretation instills its own lessons in the struggle against the dictatorship. This view runs counter to the interpretation that it was the civilians, responding to calls of civil society leaders, who saved the rebellious soldiers from slaughter by their massive troops.

These historical and falsificationary are unfolding in the next commemorations.

Heroes

AT LARGE

Elena Jimenez-David

IT'S NOT AS IF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE WILL forget anytime soon most of the people profiled in the book "Heroes," published by Asia at Home (Asiahome) and launched last Monday, Feb. 10, extended by more at the date that marks the start of the glorious four "People Power" uprising.

Who will forget, and whom will we forget, people like Lorenzo Tañada, Jovito Salonga, Jose Diokno, Ka Pepe Diokno, Doña Aurora Aquino, Doña Cristina Ongpin, Cecilia Muñoz Palma, Ninoy Aquino, Fr. James B. Reuter, S.J., and their younger colleagues in the struggle: Teofisto Guingona, Jr., Joker Arroyo, Heidi Mendoza, Jaime Ongpin, Teodoro Locsin, Jr., Rene Saguisag, Bonifacio Tiglao and Jose Burgos?

Those of us living on or somewhere near the river remember that mosquitoes before and during those four days, we will also remember the crumbled infrastructure and the "Showdown TV" computer operators at the Comelec center where we stood through the wee hours monitoring the election returns brought the new EDSA revolutionary government to power. Those days are etched in Edsa. And who could ever forget the pictures of that confrontation between the Marcos soldiers and the nuns armed only with rosaries, the women religious putting their lives on the line on the front lines of Edsa, and their heart in their prayers for the safety of the rebel soldiers?

So, we won't forget those supreme nuns, but there's a generation of Filipinos, the majority of our population, who know of them only vaguely, who do not in the remotest sense remember times and events that truly recognize their names and perhaps their true significance.

In the introduction, euphoric terms of the events in Edsa years ago, most of the books and media productions about it centered on the main characters on the drama: Ninoy and Cory Aquino, Ferdinand Marcos, Juan Ponce Enrile, Fidel V. Ramos, even foreign diplomats. Through their stories and their words, the events of Edsa are told, refracting history through their viewpoints, their biases, and their perceptions and contributions to the events.

In this book, the editors called Soledad Reyes to tell the story of Edsa by using the voices of the "Edsa people," ordinary citizens who provided the "people

power" on those four days. Collating anecdotes, diary entries, first person accounts and letters, the books give us the views from the ground up, providing multiple points of view from which we could piece together the entire tale.

THE SAP is the narrative line in the stories the people profiled in "Heroes" tell. They are significant political personages who helped guide the events of the Edsa Revolution, but the emotions that led to the turning point. They were eyewitnesses to history who were not content to just watch events unfold but sought to influence it in whatever way they could. They are other ordinary people, both older and younger, who rallied to the call of the times, and those who didn't know of it in all—were provided the people for whom my father's story, indeed this whole book, has real value. In its heart John recounted not his version of the people who made Edsa possible but the major players. It happened because of ordinary citizens, people who became extraordinary heroes. People like my father..."

Writing of Linda Kapunan and the other company programmers whose walkout from the Comelec center induced popular perception that the election results had been rigged, Sylvia Mayuga quotes Linda on how they rose to the occasion: "Any basically decent person would have done the same thing."

ANOTHER value particularly in "Heroes" is the look now to Edsa, in the profiles of Salonga, Diokno, Tañada, et al, make clear, the road to Edsa was paved years, decades before the uprising. The foundation was laid by those statesmen who cut their teeth on the movements for nationalism, who served their country in the halls of congress and senate, and who in various ways allied with other compatriots during the martial law years, and who finally joined their personal gold and anger with that of the people after Ninoy Aquino was murdered.

Manuel L. Quezon III, president Corazon Aquino, writes for his generation, "the heirs of the people's victory," who voted for Salonga in his late, ardent try at the presidency and "wrote down to marginalized defeat with our unpresentable candidates. But as time, for once in our life, we had to count on luck."

In Mary John Mananzan, standing in for the hundreds of women religious and veiled religious congregations who risk their "charisma" on in Edsa, also points out that were it not for the years of organizing and preaching and teaching the issues during the anti-dictatorship struggle, the nuns would not have been at visible duty at some whether the sisters' previous exposure to and immersion in the struggles of the poor and dispossessed, the nuns, "were if the Pope had made the call, they would not have responded."

After the figure in "Heroes" will to, there is the moment that emerge from a moment of grace and emotion, the few seconds in which one has to make up one's mind, draw one's breath, and avail one's nerves. Fidel Ramos, Juan Ponce Enrile, Jaime Cardinal Sin, Corazon Aquino, under other circumstances, difficult, reluctant and unwanted as these may have been—the mantles of heroism would have simply passed them by.

The legend of J.R.

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

URBAN LEGENDS IN PHILIPPINE HISTORY fascinate me. While some people search for the "White Lady" of Balete Drive or Robbie Salvador's "Snake Time" looking in cigarettes never-ending rooms, I try to find the elusive "Kapre" that lives in an ancient mango tree near the Emilio Aguinaldo house in Kawit or Andres Bonifacio's lone child Bruna places apply named Liling who lives in a cave in Montalban. The object of my search this time is the wonderful legend that the most incredible Rizal urban legend was that he was the father of Adolf Hitler, the result of an indiscretion with a prostitute in Vienna. The most current urban legend is that Rizal is Jack the Ripper.

The legend of Rizal as Jack the Ripper was in Los Angeles May 1986 to January 1988, in the British Library reading "Famous for his little Filipina" he found because there were no photocopying machines at the time. Jack the Ripper was never caught and the mystery of his identity remains what Rizal did or might or on the days he was not in the library some people would like to believe Rizal is suspect. They argue that when Rizal left London, the Ripper murders stopped. They say that Jack the Ripper stopped killing because Rizal returned, based on the way his victims were mutilated. Rizal, of course, was a doctor. Jack the Ripper liked women, and we did not count Rizal. And, this is so ominous that it is overlooked by many, was Rizal's initial reaction to news of Jack the Ripper?

The Jack the Ripper legend was dead on the most unlikely things. Rizal only made passing reference to Jack the Ripper in an essay on the Carolina Coello women in the April 30, 1890 issue of La Solidaridad. Can this be added as the Rizal writings that are circumstantial evidence to make Rizal suspect?

If you open the Jack the Ripper website, you will find Rizal's name on the long list of suspects. There is even a forum dedicated to Rizal, happy be a certain "Metamorphosis" who signs in as

legends from Canada and signs the postings "Rizal," but this posting has the following data:

"In 1888, he was staying with the Harkers [similar to 37 Chalcot Crescent in Camden London], who was a doctor [John Seward], the second person with connection (was called 'the Count Dracula'), he was a Malay; he was proficient in the martial arts; He would have been 27 at the time of the Ripper killings; he was short, had dark skin, dark hair, and dark eyes; He came from a city to do business with a doctor; he left for Germany before the coins to London on May 20, 1888 on the ship City of Berlin, 14 left London in January of 1889, and the Ripper killings stopped; He was multotented (could speak many languages, was a writer, poet, painter, sculptor, artist); He was stationed in the Philippines on December 30, 1896 at the age of 35; Had a romantic relationship with Gertrude Beckett—the daughter of Charles Beckett; He never known as his Dr. Rizal Mercado in Noli Me Tangere; Interesting to note that letters are sent to the family of Rizal's from July 1888 to 14, 1888; After he died, his mother tried to get more his assets which consisted of some jewelry and gold, including gold cuff links and other buttons of diamonds and attachable gold chain with a crescent shape; Could this count even be further investigation, which I intend to do."

She provided a photo of Rizal from an Argentinian website leading a certain Dean Andrew and, writer and historian, to remark:

"An interesting character; good luck with this

research and come back with more what you can with such South American features, I doubt that he'd fit well with the pseudo-intelligence, but then again, he was a doctor, and he was aware of those witnesses saw the Ripper anyway. After all, foreign suspects from those years were under investigation by the police as he was."

There somebody remarked that Rizal was in Paris at the time of the Ripper killings. Antis Ongpin, was on up leading "Rizal" to reply:

"OK, maybe he didn't kill Annie Chapman, but he had a Patient called Dr. Antonio Regidor who could have killed her. Rizal could write him in Paris prior to moving in with the Beckers. Dr. Regidor was also from Manila. They were quite close."

It was also noted that one of the Ripper victims was buried in the same cemetery where Regidor and his family presently lie in peace. Same lane actually!

"Since Dr. Rizal was in Paris between Sept. 4 and Sept. 18, 1888, it is therefore impossible for him to have killed Annie Chapman. However, of set some digging, I discovered that Rizal had a good friend named Dr. Reinhold Rost who lived permanently I think from the Bonnets' as I remember Rizal, Cambodia."

The most incredible piece of information—and absolutely unverifiable—is that some time in January 1986, the present owners of the London house which stood at the corner of Castle St. and Dorset were thus reinstalled a diary where Rizal confesses to the Whitechapel murders and a plan for all which's human interest preserved in its shell.

All these cases are ridiculous, but in life and death there is room for the ridiculous. Rizal's legend may not be open-ended but, keeping him forever and encouraging a curiosity after his execution.

Comments are welcome at ocampoambeth@yahoo.com

Gaia

WHENEVER WE HAVE A DISASTER, LIKE THE LANGUBLIS in Southern Leyte, we hear environmentalists warning us that the tragedies are master's way of getting back at us for our recklessness.

That metaphor of a spiteful master is a powerful one, and is intended to get people to be more respectful of nature, but it's against it for two reasons. First, this view of nature makes us look at humanity as somehow separate from nature, sometimes to the point of seeing her as an adversary. Second, this view just seems critical of us.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Living much closer to nature than most of my countrymen developed sensitive beliefs that aroused respect and fear. Our ancestors believed we were surrounded by spirits, both benevolent and malevolent. Such beliefs made our ancestors live in awe of nature and more or entire environment. The response tended to be one of avoiding places that were unfamiliar and strange, less spirits there be angered.

These animist views remain strong in this 21st century. Drive down any major highway, and you're bound to suddenly find a cow in the middle. Ask around and you're sure to hear that cows and carabaos refused to cross that spot ever because they believed it had outspirits. Many of the stories will include accounts of accidents, even deaths, among the construction crews as they tried to build the highway.

These practices remain widespread, even in cities, architects and contractors routinely use this character before new structures or renovation, and acknowledge that they do this more for the peace of mind of the workers, lastly master rapes who fear the spirits of the place.

Ecology

Paradoxically, while we remain not very much in deference to nature, our fear into some time drives us to another extreme of trying to control nature, too.

We are modernizing and technology in ways of running, even conquering nature. For more on many humans with huge lots, they will have a machine mounted to cover every inch of soil, every last centimeter of nature.

One of my biggest frustrations organizing conferences and workshops in the Philippines has been the lack of hotels that have retained some view of nature. Last year when I was organizing an international meeting, I realized, with sadness, that most of the best hotels along Roxas Boulevard do not have a single function room with a view of the sea that I was also due to renovation that room with a view of trees or at least gardens. One hotel manager told me that this was intentional, to keep the participants from getting distracted by the outside, and by the beautiful scenery.

Next year on is an architectural relationship with nature. Anything underwater (beach—plants or animals—are seen as dangerous. Even at HC where people constantly talk about environmental conservation, there are still filled signs, like the one at the entrance to the cafeteria "Biodiversity Loss" of facilities, the faculty and students immediately propose air-conditioned rooms. The windowless malls, hotels, offices and classrooms represent our attempts to conquer nature.

Gaia

Until disaster strikes. And we once again acknowledge the power of nature and talk about respecting nature. It is ironic for this don't seem, the first factor works.

We need alternative views of nature that go beyond fear. For thinking of the Gaia hypothesis, named after the Greek goddess of earth, which proposed that the earth is kept by atmospheric chemist James Lovelock and biologist Lynn Margulis in 1979. For simply, the Gaia hypothesis views life of nature as one living organism that maintains conditions necessary for its survival. The planet earth can therefore be seen as one living organism for even ancient cell, according to the Gaia hypothesis. Humans, which all life is linked from earth to her itself-regulating cycles.

Now dismissed as romantic lie and unrealistic, the Gaia hypothesis has since gained more adherents as scientists realized the hypothesis was quite powerful in helping to predict interactive life forms.

Some of the accepted predictions can be quite unpredictable. For example, what would happen if we continue to explore the outer layer as we do today, in terms of temperature change? And for every fraction of one degree of temperature change, what might happen to sea levels, to rainfall and soil, or temperature? Or what would those in turn affect food production, disease patterns?

Other predictions are based on common sense, and can be quite localized. Our fishing communities, for example, can be considered that due to their population groups, they get less fish. Well, we know that fish are migratory and that they are not affected, that others you take from the sea and don't give anything back, so resources are depleted. What the fisherfolk may not see throughout the other chains of natural branches that follow the fish depletion: fresh resources that lead to a dwindling of other animals and plant species. Fish, changes in the sea itself. It's harder to say how the changes in the marine environment will affect all other aspects of life on the planet, on the land, in the atmosphere. Some of the changes will have no effect on human communities, others may be quite dramatic, from landslides in El Nido or La Mesa.

The Gaia hypothesis forces us to think in terms of systems, and in the long term. Who would have thought that the extension of home lands into western civilization in Europe, during the 1600s, would eventually mean—helps with other developments—growing population, the loss of whole species of birds and animals, and even the loss of two entire—to challenge issues? Scientists had to make tough "choices." In this case, this didn't "punish" humans. What else did was to disperse with the mountain, allowing it to fall to the earth where, unfortunately, proved thousand people lived.

Such environmental crisis poses new challenges, and using the Gaia hypothesis, we have to be conscious about how our perceived solutions relate to the entire living organism that is the planet.

We see hunger and poverty in our communities, and we think, fast, the solution is "development." Our national land are only to use land for industry, companies to grow jobs, bring in foreign exchange and lift people out of their poverty. In Bataan a trade in gold antidotes and, in fact money, industry may actually welcome the companies into their area without thinking of what the mining operations might mean in the long term.

When environment crises under pressure, humans are usually quite dispensable. After all, we're only been around about 100,000 years on a planet that's had life forms for about 3 billion years. We are the greatest source of stress for the planet, and yet we are really quite immaterial to its survival in the long run.

The Gaia hypothesis suggests that we work with nature, understanding that when we take something from the planet, we need to return something. Ultimately it's our choice that create the conditions for our own survival, or extinction.

America and global warming

I ALMOST FELL OFF MY SEAT UP on reading the headline "Erotic Earth's now at risk. Let's save it." (PDI, 2/16/06).

In my kindest, I can say the statement constituted the height of hypocrisy. Orwellian double-talk, at its worst.

While I appreciate the former US vice president's concern for domestic environmental economy, tion and ecological balance, I think it would serve him well if he delivers that message to current US President George W. Bush who, to date, still refuses to sign the Kyoto Protocol, which is aimed at addressing global warming, the very phenomenon that Gore wishes to combat. Gore, when he was still the vice president already knows for his environmental advocacy could have convinced then US President Bill Clinton to sign the Kyoto Protocol. But he chose not to for reasons that he alone knows.

And stubbornly before a captive audience of paltriest leaders, businessmen and members of the diplomatic corps, he now sees the need for a global consensus to combat global warming, a phenomenon that his country refuses to address by its continued refusal to accede to the Kyoto Protocol.

The fact is, the United States and Canada contribute to global warming more than any other country in the world. Not even China or India can approximate the United States' contribution to global warming. Canada has signed the Kyoto Protocol.

Why does the United States refuse to sign the "Kyoto Agreement on Climate Change"? Because of an influential consumer lobby. This means, more than any conceivable environmental protection or the global level, the paramount consideration of inefficient US industries is the profit margins it s US-dominated global free trade. The United States knows that most of the greenhouse gas emissions that causes global warming comes from inefficient US industries. In hindsight, Clinton now believes the United States should have signed the Kyoto Protocol.

The United States — more than the developing countries, whose contribution to global warming is negligible—should shoulder the bulk of the burden in the effort to arrest global warming. But it refuses to do so. It refuses to sign the Kyoto Protocol because of the power of corporate America to dictate on the US government, be it Republican or Democrat-dominated.

—LEVI B. REYES PENTECOSTES, Office of Sen. Nikki Pangilinan, Rm 1011, Philippine Senate, GSIS Building, Pasay City

Strengthen Charter mechanism for fighting graft

IN THEIR HASTE TO CHANGE the Constitution, advocates spelled out seven new proposals. Some of these proposed amendments, however, seeks to strengthen the committee's mechanisms for fighting graft and corruption.

Under our present Constitution, the Ombudsman, which initially takes cognizance of complaints against public officials, government officials and employees, is a constitutional body; on the other hand, the Sandiganbayan, which has jurisdiction over all the cases that the Ombudsman may file, is not. The Constitution provides for but does not create the Sandiganbayan (Art. XI-B, Sec. 4[6]). The Ombudsman is removable only by impeachment and his office has found no permanent home. The Sandiganbayan has no fiscal autonomy and its justices are removable like any ordinary judge or justice of the Court of Appeals.

The proposed Charter change should make the Sandiganbayan a constitutional creature, as par with the Ombudsman. Thus, the justices of the Sandiganbayan will be able to discharge their duties free from acts sort of pressure or harassment. And thus, it will not be easy to undermine the independence, impartiality and efficiency of the Sandiganbayan justices.

To ensure the independence of the Commission on Elections, Commission on Audit and Civil Service Commission, the Constitution provides for their creation. Why not the Sandiganbayan, too, considering that its functions are equally sensitive as, if not more significant than, the above-mentioned constitutional bodies?

Finally, in order to give Sandiganbayan justices the prestige and honor they fittingly deserve as guardians of morality and integrity in public service, they should be given a rank and salary higher than those of the Court of Appeals.

In order words, in the hierarchy of courts, the Sandiganbayan should be second only to the Supreme Court.

Any amendment as to the form of government will be an exercise in futility if we will not provide in the new Constitution the necessary ways and measures to establish and maintain a government that is efficient, honest, decent and impervious to graft and corruption.

If we look back at history—into the experiences of ancient Greece, Rome and China, to mention a few—we will see that corruption has been the cause of the disorganization and breakdown of societies, ultimately leading to the violent overthrow of the ruling power. Certainly, we do not wish the thought that the Philippines will be remembered in history for such an experience.

—MANUEL B. PAMAOL, former presiding justice, Sandiganbayan

'Undemocratic hatred' and religious fanaticism

CONTRARY TO QUINZE OPPOSES the right approach to idealize optimal over the "Muhammad cartoons" (PDI, 2/14/06): found firm, don't give up an inch. Freedom of speech has to be defended ideally and absolutely. To give in even just a little is "undemocratic hatred". Above is democratic hatred, of course!) is to make democracy (and freedom of speech) most vulnerable to fanaticism.

Democracy assumes that we do not know everything there is to know; moreover that no religious belief.

Anyway, the proper document for this is the 33 line on religious defamation. In the Danish cartoons debate, maybe hatred and prejudice against Muslims and Islam? To some degree, perhaps. But in 10 years, they would most just a few dollars from the offending party.

—MIHAI IHOSAREL are_ihosharie_50@yahoo.com

LETTERS

House award is not fake

INQUIRER COLUMNIST NERI Gran's allegation that the Congressional Medal of Achievement awarded to "Fake" is a highly unethical smack at the House of Representatives, based on wrong information. (PDI, 2/20/06)

The House and its speaker do not give out "fake awards." The awarded Gran Cruzada! was instituted on Nov. 18, 2002 during the Second Regular Session of the 12th Congress through House Resolution No. 410, titled "Instituting A Congressional Medal of Achievement to Confer the House of Representatives to Honor Political, Economic and Cultural Leaders Who Have Distinguished Themselves Through Their Life-Work and Values."

That Gran opted to be more thorough by verifying his information, he could have obtained from our office a copy of Resolution No. 410.

To attempt to picture the Congressional Medal of Achievement as "fake" is an unwarranted disservice to the distinguished men and women who have received it and to the institution that bestows it.

The award is manifestly a House award. That being so, there is no need for the speaker to appear or adopt it. One third point: this does not bar the Senate from initiating its own award if the Chamber so desires.

On three occasions, even, has my President Franklin Ticlos was witness to the award ceremonies—where Speaker Jose de Venecia presented the award to three Asian political luminaries before they addressed the Joint Session of the Philippine Congress: President Benigno Macaraeg of Odessa and President Jiang Zemin of China in April last year, and President Kalam of India early this month.

As a faithful reader of the Inquirer, I expect its opinion writers to be, at the very least, factual and fair.

—ALBERTO P. NAZARENO, secretary general, House of Representatives National Investment Center Constellation Hills, Quezon City

Against Crew's mining project

THIS IS A REACTION TO THE Talk of the Town section last Feb. 5.

In behalf of the stakeholder communities of Rizalenon, I would like to protest our total opposition to the mining project of Crew, Philippines.

2. It is true that "there had been talks with Mark Agbulang, Mining Corporation and Crew." But these have been preliminary going on even before the disastrous floods that struck Calapan City and its neighboring towns last December 2004. In fact, the opposition to the project is overwhelming, coming not only from the Church, indigenous peoples and civil society but also from elected officials and nongovernment (councils) of the affected communities and even from the Provincial Board of Oriental Mindoro back in January 2005, a provincial ordinance declared a 25-year moratorium on mining in the province.

3. The reason for opposing the project stems not from any speculation but from the fact that the mining concession is inside the province's critical watershed. Any mining poses the risks of erosion, flooding, degradation of agricultural lands, loss of biodiversity, etc. This is mentioned in the pre-feasibility studies conducted by Crew in Manila, which was contaminated by the mining company itself.

5. The claim that mining will make Mindoro "one of the richest provinces in the country" is both erroneous and misleading. The mining will cause in the environs. Former Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez himself said: "What does it gain a province to be short-sighted and merely think of money when no impact, life damage to the environment will set human lives, health and livelihood, capacity of our farmers and fisherfolks, endangering the food security of our people?"

6. Crew promises a lot to erase the indigenous peoples equally and promises them great benefits, but what it fails to disclose is that 9,720 hectares covered by its application is inside the ancestral domains of the Mangyan and Tadyawan Hanunuos. What is more deplorable is the way a group of Mangyans has been manipulated to allow the company to project as friends of acceptability. The fact is that Crew's entry in the Mangyan ancestral lands seriously threatens their livelihood.

5. Lastly, the claim that the Philippines has 25 percent of the world's nickel reserves is grossly misleading and needs to be substantiated.

With all the foregoing above stating in the "ticket to progress," we are more inclined to believe the DENR's position that "the proposed mining ecosystem benefits of mining by the transnational corporations are outweighed by the destruction of communities, especially among our indigenous brothers and sisters, and the risks to human health and natural resources and damage of the environment."

—FR. EDWIN S. GARCIA, Bishop's Residence, Calapan City

SC's vow: signal or condition?

"SC VOWS NO INTERFERENCE IN common politics" (PDI, 2/17/06) The vow was made by new Supreme Court Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban before local government officials, including governors, vice-governors of provinces, Sixth, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th Judicial Region, at the Manila Polo Club, Panganiban made the same vow before the Philippine Constitution Association.

In the vow an adverse matter that, under Panganiban's watch, it is pointless for aggrieved Filipinos in question before the Supreme Court economic policies implemented by the multilateral agencies by the World Bank, the International Monetary Bank and the World Trade Organization upon our foreign debts?

Most of these debt conditions, if not illegal, circumvent or violate our right the nationalist provisions of the Constitution which gives Filipinos special rights to our natural resources, public utilities, the professions, educational institutions, mass media and advertising.

Or is Panganiban's pledge one of the constitutionally enabled to the hasn and grants obtained by the Supreme Court from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Community, the United Nations Development Program, United Nations Development and the American Agency for International Development?

Is Panganiban's pledge a signal to the agents of globalization in the Philippines that, under his watch, they may liberalize, deregulate and privatize the playing field in the Philippines for the benefit of international corporations, without fear of judicial intervention?

—ARSENIO LAVESORES, 145-10th Avenue, Cubao, QC

The turtle racing against onrushing tide of poverty

ONE OF THE MOST REPEATED LINES IN President Macapagal-Arroyo's 2005 State of the Nation Address was her claim that the Philippine economy, after attaining a 2004 GDP growth rate of 6.1 percent, was now "poised for takeoff." Last Jan. 30, the National Statistics Coordination Board announced a growth rate of 5.1 percent in 2005.

Even if we accept the government figure of a 5.1 percent GDP growth for 2005, it certainly did not indicate a "takeoff." In fact, it showed an economic "plunge"—down from a 6.1 percent growth claimed in 2004. At almost 5 percent below the 2004 growth is enormous in absolute amounts.

Also, Filipinos should understand that, on the basis of historical experience, a country can only "take-off" from underdevelopment if it is able to maintain an average of no less than 7 percent for two consecutive decades. Much more so in the case of the Philippines, which has an average population growth rate of 2.3 percent.

In his "7+7" economic program, Speaker Jose de Venecia pushes for a growth rate of 7 percent for at least seven years as a basis for takeoff. An IMF working paper ("Growth, Income Distribution and Economic Policy in the Philippines," 2000) cracked the average GDP growth of selected countries in Asia for a period of 25 years) as follows: Korea, 8.9 percent; Malaysia, 7.0 percent; Thailand, more than 7 percent; Indonesia, 7 percent; and the Philippines, a measly 2.8 percent. This shows why the Philippines has been left behind in the race for economic progress in Asia, and why neighboring countries, like Malaysia and Korea (not to mention China with average growth rates of 9-10 percent), have taken off to become NICs (newly industrialized countries). The paper further argues that the poor growth performance of the Philippines is also the cause of its failure to reduce poverty now at 40 percent, according to the Development Bank of the Philippines.

Sen. Mar Roxas says that blockages in the economy prevent production gains from trickling down to the poor and that a less than 5-percent net GDP growth was negative for the masses, among other blockages to the highly inequitable distribution of income, the diversion of a substantial portion of government revenue (more than 30 percent of the national budget) to debt payment, and our growing dependence on exports.

Government and mainstream Filipino economists, eager to please whoever is in power, laud each dismal gain in economic growth as a great advance. They are like a hotel turtle with a poor eyesight which, because it is able to take painfully slow steps, thinks it is outpacing the advancing tide that would drag it to the deep. Its loudly proclaiming progress where there is none, while continuing to pursue the economic policies of the past 40 years, our government officials are making it inevitable for the onrushing tide of poverty to drag our people down to the swirling depths of desperation and revolution.

—MANUEL L. ARAMBO, solaluan@yahoo.com

GSIS' insensitivity to elderly pensioners

AS ONE OF THE CONCERNED RETIREE pensioners, I write this letter to call attention to the problems which senior regular pensioners who have enrolled at the Govea in some Executive Specialty Hotels' system, as required by Winston F. Garcia, is or rare as E-card.

Although we are against the imposition, as good followers, we obeyed first before complaining. I would like to make it clear: Sir pensioners enrolled not because we wanted to comply with Garcia's requirement but because our Board Issuing order (Resolution) is for non-compliance. That would have meant being deprived of food and medicines. (We were given a time frame within which to comply with Garcia's order, otherwise, our pension will be withheld or delayed.)

Most pensioners dislike the E-card policy because they are old, with impaired vision and hearing. Hire the E-card is no longer practical and compatible for them.

It is more convenient for the pensioners to get their pensions in checks delivered at their homes, because then they can just sign their checks either for endorsement or encashment. They don't have to travel anymore to an ATM machine to get their pensions.

The measly 3-percent increase (effective January 2006) in the pensions of retiree-pensioners, most of whom are living in poverty and deprivation, was an insult to them. It showed that Garcia regards GSIS pensioners as beggars. How can these pensioners be blessed out of their misery with that 3-percent increase, especially at this time of economic crisis? Garcia is a callous human being without emotion and no sympathy for elderly people in the autumn of their lives.

—ANTONIO B. BORJA, 214-L Bel-Pilar St., Dasmariñas, Cavite City 4115

Across the NATION

Phivolcs raises alert level in Mayon

LEGAZPI CITY—AUTHORITIES RAISED THE ALERT level around Mayon to 2 after the volcano emitted ash that was preceded by a series of weak earthquakes.

Ed Laguerta, Bicol director of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), said the volcano spewed ash 300 meters high from its crater.

The Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council said the alert level meant that no one should stray into a 6-km radius around the volcano that was delineated as a permanent danger zone.

The small explosion deposited ash in the upper slopes of the volcano, a Monday bulletin said.

It said more explosions could occur in the next few days as magma rises and releases gas inside the volcano.

Laguerta said a team from Manila would arrive today to fix the seismic sensors installed at the foot of the volcano.

"What happened today was just a minor explosion," he said.

Laguerta said the Phivolcs is watching out for three other signs of a possible eruption—swelling of the volcano's dome, intense crater glow and increase in the emission of ash.

The Phivolcs, he said, requested for a helicopter from the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) to be used by a Phivolcs team to make a closer look at Mayon to assess the recovery.

The OCD said it is also closely coordinating with Phivolcs to monitor the volcano's restiveness and alert people as soon as it shows signs of erupting.

It said village councils were told to prepare for a possible eruption and put their disaster preparedness plans in place.

"But there is no reason for the people to panic at this point in time," Laguerta said.

The 2,421-meter Mayon, known as a textbook-shaping cone of erupting, is now prepared to evacuate people and bring them to safety. Joanna Lei Bolisa, with a report from Jill Pronsato Arevalo, PDI Central Bureau

FOREIGN AID

Members of a Taiwanese rescue team try to dig through at least 100 feet of mud and boulders in the hope of finding survivors in a mudslide that swamped the entire village of Guinsaugon in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte.

Moms of 11 backpackers seek release of kids tagged by cops as guerrillas

MACABEBE CITY—THE MOTHERS OF 11 BACKpackers, who were linked by the police and military to the Feb. 14 raid of an Army detachment in Benguet, on Tuesday called on the government to release their children following reports that they were maltreated while in detention.

The backpackers, whose ages range from 17 to 28, were arrested at a police checkpoint in Barangay Bangao in Bagulin, Benguet, on Feb. 14 while they were on their way to Sagada, Mt. Province.

Police said they were members of a New People's Army unit that raided an Army detachment in Mankayan, Benguet on Feb. 10. Two soldiers and a government militiaman were killed in that attack.

The mother of a 15-year-old student said her daughter would cry whenever she recalled the abuse she underwent. She said her daughter was beaten by male companions were tortured.

She said her daughter was the only woman among the group. The suspects are members of a punk rock group who performed earlier at a music festival in Cotcot, Subic, the police learned.

"My daughter was kicked and her face was covered with clothes made of plastic. The police were forcing her to admit that she is an NPA rebel," the mother said during a private briefing.

The suspects' relatives said the group, after a performance in Cotcot, went to Baguio and Angeles.

Florfelina Molinas, mother of Abbie Christian Molinas, 18, said she saw her son's bruises at the Benguet provincial jail last week.

Bul. Jovenal Tagaki Alexander Pumaylin, spokesperson of the Cordillera police, said the backpackers were not tortured.

Police charged them with robbery with homicide in connection with the raid on the Army detachment where 23 firearms were stolen.

Student activist Leo Lee, 24, one of the suspects, escaped and asked help from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) in Baguio City. Jhoanne Cabaos, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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ROUNDUP

Suspicious planes

ILIGAN, Isabela — Private planes, without markings and flying at low altitudes, have been spotted in coastal towns in Isabela for the past months, raising suspicions that these have been delivering illegal goods via the Pacific Ocean, a police official said. Isabela police director Senior Supt. Perfecto Rocha said the airplanes have been suspected of unloading coal tubed such as firearms or prohibited drugs in the coastal towns of Palanan, Dinapigue, Divanigan and Maconacon. Except for Dinapigue, the coastal towns are accessible only by plane or boat or a long hike.

Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

3 held for car theft

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna — Three suspected members of a car theft syndicate, including a minor, were arrested in separate police operations in Batangas City on Feb. 18. Police said months Primitivo Tapia accused a 17-year-old boy of taking the keepsake in front of the house in Bauan town. An hour later, police arrested the minor while he drove the tricycle. The minor later identified two men as the leaders of the group. Police arrested the two in Mabini.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Car thief killed

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna — A traffic enforcer and suspected car thief, who was allegedly behind the killing of a visiting student in Pasalubong, was killed while his four other companions were arrested in a shootout on Feb. 19 in Sto. Tomas, La Union. Police said the slain suspect, Edwardo Ebuenga, and four other suspects were behind the killing of Richard Capili, a 19-year-old nursing student, after he was shot dead by three men who took his Toyota Revo (WFV 883) on El Nonoy, Pasalubong on Feb. 12.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Computer program blamed

BACOLOD CITY — A manager of the Government Service Insurance System blamed the incompatibility of the Department of Education's electronic remittance file program with that used by the agency as the reason for the exchanges it imposes on the teachers' loan payments. Marina Muñoz, GSIS branch manager here, said the incompatible accounting program delays the posting of the teachers' remittances. As a result, "we have to repeat the same process all over again once the loan payments of teachers are submitted to us," Muñoz added. The teachers have been complaining of sudden jps on their GSIS loans because of delayed payments.

Jun Escamos Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Giant snails destroy crops in Surigao Sur

TAGBINA, SURIGAO del Sur—Hundreds of hectares of rice farms in the province were flattened in what officials described was an invasion of giant snails.

The provincial agriculture office said the infestation was triggered by floods that swept the province and several towns of Caraga.

Mayra Quiro, provincial agriculturist, said at least 15 towns suffered from the infestation—Surigao, Bayabas, Cagwait, Cantilan, Carmen, Carrascal, Cortes, Lanuza, Lianga, Madrid, Marihatag, San Agustin, San Miguel, Tago and this town.

"In the past years rapid infestation of rice lands was very minimal," he said.

Quiro said heavy rains in the past three months brought the snails out. They are normally dormant during the dry season.

"We have to replenish the damaged plants so there will be a shortage of rice this year," he said.

Quiro warned of a price increase in case of a shortage.

He said he requested for rice seeds to be given to farmers.

Quiro also urged farmers to help remove the snails manually, put them in sacks and burn them.

The golden snail is a native of South America.

It was introduced into the country by the Marcos regime in the 1980s to boost food security and provide an alternative source of protein. *Bert Pascua, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

CONDO CHALLENGE

A set of stairs, with 7 (1 step) and which rises to 2,000 feet above sea level, would be part of a race in April in Conoc, Pasay—dubbed as the Mt. Tapyas Extra Challenge. For inquiries, call Toni Bono at 09-15253465.

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

PMA 'Edsa' class recalls passion for change

MOMENT: Members of the PMA Sinagtala Class of 1986 take the oblique pose during their homecoming on Saturday in Fort del Pilar in Baguio City. The class is the first batch of PMA graduates that former President Corazon Aquino addressed after the unnamed power-lobbying in Edsa revolt. This photo has been flipped. ARCHIE LIAMZON

By Vincent Cabreza
Fort del Pilar, Baguio City

THEY WERE THE FIRST cadets to graduate on the heels of a revolution, and members of the Philippine Military Academy "Sinagtala" Class of 1986 celebrated that milestone on Feb. 18 during the PMA homecoming that was shadowed by a coup plot.

Senate Sgt.-at-Arms Atty. Roberto Rances, class president, said Sinagtala was already convinced that the 186 throughout Ferdinand Marcos' had too much power when they were suddenly informed that people had started to mass up at Edsa on Feb. 22, 1986.

"We were the first class (senior) cadets at the time — our commandant Juduru Ileto (Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, former Constabulary chief Fidel Ramos, then Col. Gregorio Honasan and the Reform the Armed Forces Movement) created Camp Aguinaldo[,]" he said.

"We were graduating and we were due to deployment to the field. The idea of Edsa was whenever would be assigned because we knew the leadership was about to change. Of course, we were supportive of the edifice-type History because he had to touch poetry," Rances said in Filipino.

He said all 174 Sinagtala members never discussed their sentiments in public because they were immediately ordered to stay in their barracks.

But their lives changed due to the 1986 Edsa Revolution.

Rances said they were the first cadets to shake the hands of a female commander-in-chief, former President Corazon Aquino, when they graduated a month after the revolt.

He said there are two who took a stronger turn. "I joined the Army Ranger to graduation. Then immediately after the revolution, they increased the quota for the number of graduating cadet deployment[ ] of the Philippine Constabulary which became the Philippine National Police, and the quota of the Philippine Navy so I joined the navy," Rances said. He is assigned to the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG).

Changes

There were changes that few people were acknowledged unaware.

Col. Archimedes Trajo, a Sinagtala member, said the class was targeted that reporters covering last September's PMA homecoming failed to interview them about the Edsa 2 revolt, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year.

"Perhaps people now tend to forget," Trajo said.

Many of his classmates are running their businesses.

The world's 20th anniversary is dreaded by many senior and persistent rumors about a military uprising because some of the junior people organized from Edsa bear ire to stakeholder 20 years after.

"We keep our dreams, but there are still many complaints. 'Why was he promoted, and we were not? Why is this officer assigned here when we can't?' At the point in the organization, even if we are promoted to senior superintendent responsibility to colonel in the military's, we are stuck because they still consider us too young to be promoted," Rances said in Filipino.

Sinagtala members were among the absent members who applauded Karen Constantino-David, chair of the Civil Service Commission, after she called for a "strong and legitimate political system free from military intervention unnecessary; is central that shows the military to simply become a professional corps."

Like most of the academy's idealistic graduates, Rances said his friends had also overcome their romantic attachment to the revolution.

"But, he said, had made them unbearable to a reported government drive for military withdrawal.

Always in the right

He said the Sinagtala members adhere to a governing principle that is "always in the right, and [to] always loyal."

"Whatever influence Enrile or Honasan had on orders after Edsa had since condensed into a more pragmatic, if righteous, outlook," he said.

This is because the figures of the revolution have also lost their movement.

Retired Navy Capt. Proceso Malapitan, RAM spokesperson, said the former rebel group has turned into a foundation that helps its members get employment or some measure of justice from the system.

Many of them were cashiered without receiving pensions, or are still facing criminal charges because they were politically embroiled from a government-initiated program for mounting a series of coups in the late 1980s, Malapitan said.

"We learned a better way," he said.

SAPAT NA BA ANG PAPURI? SAPAT NA BA ANG SALITA? KUNG TUNAY KANG NANINIWALA SA GALING NG PINOY, HINDI BA DAPAT SUPORTAHAN ANG NEGOSYONG PILIPINO?

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SPLASH GROUP of COMPANIES

EDSA I 20

THE PEOPLE

An invitation to the world's biggest party

by Ricardo R. Braganza H.D.

After hearing Cardinal Sin's voice all over the airwaves, some groups in our hospital immediately started organizing interested staff members to go to Edsa. The response was spontaneous, but I could not tell if we are enthusiastic or chicken to a fault.

Others were ready to provide help or medical services or simply to be one with the thousands who are hope that Ninoy or not would finally end.

It was like being invited to the biggest party in the world. The sight of huge numbers of people going to Edsa was overwhelming. I do not remember who were with me except that we were in several cars and vans, including people who asked to hitch a ride to Edsa.

When we got there, we mingled with the crowds and were happy to see lots of friends. Time could never seem lovely and give us bite of food or otherwise run out for. There was no fear at all at the military men around. The people in Edsa were so happy, and kindness was all around Camp Crame. I was not afraid of helicopters flying overhead or of coming close to the soldiers. Time could never seem lovely and quiet after the feud long suffered.

I spent three whole afternoons in Edsa and would leave only at night. The least spent there were like holidays for some of us, and patriotic understood why we were are at our ethnic People who remained loyal to Marcos could not seem to understand the obedience of the Cory supporters. At home and elsewhere, we would talk about what we had seen earlier in the day, such as the sight of nuns and children praying, women rapprochement soldiers who were good messages and talking to them like they were family. I planned people giving food to the soldiers as though they were feeding valiant animals that could bite them anytime, but the soldiers were sweet enough to smile and say thanks. Some would even engage people in small talk. There is pictures relieved everyone, and there would be some food, more prayers and more small talk between the civilians and the soldiers. Genuine smiles abound.

People from all walks of life were there—professionals, artists, families with their children, the handicapped, actors, socialites, ordinary workers, entrepreneurs selling food and yellow shirts with Ninoy's likeness, and media men from all over the world—just mingling around, exchanging stories or just minding each other feel good about just being there.

When the first news reports came that the Marcoses had left Malacañang, my brother, a nurse who is now practicing had spent all her life at Assumption College and I proceeded to the Palace. We just stopped us. Perhaps because of the curfew lie, we did not think of any danger, and even when people began hurling the gates open. We never knew when some people entered the Palace and saw sheets of paper flying out a window on an upper floor. We saw picture frames of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos smashed and stepped upon. We saw Marcos loyalists being hit and at some point being shielded from further harm. Some people were dressing, "dressing down, big time."

Sometime later, news proclaimed the arrival of police cars and other vehicles carrying soldiers. They arrived near me a feeling of relief, knowing that the looting and further destruction of Malacañang would be halted. Then we left, and we saw many other nurses leaving just like us. Most of those who were there were ordinary people who had come there Edsa and simply wanted to be there during that time in history.

We left Malacañang happy. I felt really good. Somehow a new Filipino in us was born.

THE MILITARY

A cool psywar expert rules the war room

by Napoleon C. Mendoza

Inside the War Room, General Ramos was already receiving a lot of information, very young, good-looking lieutenants from the Ranger Regiment, Marines and some enlisted men were there to protect a monochrome building up against Marcos.

It was very effective, at the same time, he warned his Camp Crame security group about the possible attack of a crudely pro-Marcos commando group consisting of civilians trained in Nayon under the command of a young politician from the north.

Palace is like a cemetery

I rolled up a young officer to the Presidential Security Command at the Palace and engaged him in a casual probing conversation. He was very nice about it, subtle, but found ourselves in opposite camps. I told him we were in a fortified stand in Crame, had plenty of food. He said it was very quiet in the Palace. "It's like a cemetery here," and not much food.

Then, high alert at the morning on Feb. 24 saw the detention of the Philippine Marines at radio helicopters under Col. Antonio Enrile. This was followed later by announcement that Marcos had left in a really sporting shoes in the Camp Crame ground. (which led to the famous Sunday-Times). It was a false alarm, but angry Marcos all of midnight departed on TV.

If became very tense in the Crame headquarters. Shortened radio communication of the pro-Marcos forces sounded like they were starting to train their artillery on Camp Crame. We were sitting ducks with only that crowd on our hands.

General Ramos gave instructions for civilians to clear the building. I went down to second lay with Ruby outside and instantly kissed her goodbye for the very moment what was happening.

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CHIEF CHIEF of the revolt. Enrile (foreground) came at the break as top military in Camp Crame's war room. Strident on the phone talking to Marcos, Enrile was the first high government official after Ramos and Fidel Ramos, to withdraw support from Marcos.

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Let the shells fall

At the War Room, someone suggested, "General Ramos, sir, I think we should transfer to the second floor because we only have the weak steel on our perimeter when those shells fall." But Ramos very coolly said: "No, we stay here because this is the command base in here, and stay are very important. We stay until the shells start falling. I am sure the first rounds won't hit us."

Some guys started lining down sandbags and blankets on the desks for cover. There was not enough room for all of us there so we just dropped our shoulders and waited for the shells to fall.

But the shells never came. The just remained silent because the other side, now we know, refused to load the ammunition, while the soldiers in the area were being followed.

Then all chaos was gone and we all breathed a sigh of relief.

Later that day, a chopper courageously landed and fired a rocket at Malacañang. Then, another chopper landed at Camp Crame. I called my friend at Malacañang. My friend said they were terribly shaken. They were obviously demoralized and I talking friend, "Take care of yourself."

The Ramos-rescues attack culminated with the decision to seize Channel 4. Capt. Phil Pinto was one of those tasked to lead the attack. There was radio silence for a while, then Pinto's voice was heard on the radio: "Sir, we have taken over Channel 4." He instructed Channel 4 personnel to use big Ramos's jingle-ring to the broadcast but only small Ramos and then give to disperse the people at Edsa. When my father heard that, he laughed.

"Who is he kidding? Of course they cannot use the big Ramos because the camera has two dominant feet," he said.

He could not stop laughing, probably it was relief that the pressure was off him.

It was only happy ever since.

At about 3 p.m., two police cars stopped in front of our gate. Six policemen alighted. While two headed at our gate, the others moved behind their cars with clamor firearms.

I left them handing at the gate for five minutes, because it looked as though we were in the way brothers, father and our sisters, husbands to take their position in case there should be a gunfight inside the compound and children inside in the house.

I approached the gate and, with a very authoritative voice, asked through the intercom how may I help you.

Report of guns

The policeman said he received reports that there were guns in the house.

I asked if they had a search warrant and if they had to go search.

I never gave my answer. The policeman went back to their cars and drove off.

After I went into the house, my father said if the policemen returned and insisted on searching, we should show it our with them.

At 5:30 p.m., my mother named nurses, three to one of his body guards to prepare his uniform and stuff on, he was going to Camp Crame.

He called another nurse to collect some things from that he was delivering and have someone meet him at the gate as he would not be carrying any arms.

The third soldier sent in my behind to prescribe house.

At about 3 p.m., my father and two drivers' bodyguards left For Camp Crame.

Delivered from War

We were all listening to "Radyo Bandido" after dinner when we heard the announcement that my father was one of the key officers to have joined the Enrile-Ramos camp. We all clapped for my father because he made the right decision. I felt so proud of him for having delivered himself from the bondage of being a stooge of General Ver.

At about 9 p.m., my father returned from Camp Crame and had a lot of numbers to tell. He told Gen. Renato de Villa about his friend and confidant Gen. Gustavo Hernandez that he joining them and invited him to the briefing on the conclusion of the breakaway group. He told Camp Crame was bursting with his elderly love, pride and unity. It was a new beginning for our father. He could see the excitement in his eyes.

Day 4, Feb. 25, 1986

One day started early. My father left for Camp Crame at 6 a.m. We watched TV almost the entire day and saw Cory inaugurated as President of the Philippines at Club Filipino. We also saw President Marcos' version of his inauguration at Malacañang.

By early evening, the news was out that President Marcos with his family and friends were leaving for Hawaii aboard. This was really a true moment of joy for every Filipino and we were glad that now things would be back to normal.

We zealously waited for my father to get home to discuss the latest developments in the Enrile-Ramos camp. He returned at about 11 p.m. with Gen. Hernandez. Then General Ramos had placed him in charge of the mopping-up operations—first to, the dousing of general headquarters in Malacañang and the DSC camp. He was given this responsibility because he was the only senior officer who had the competence for the job.

That night I decided to stay with my father because he knew he performed to the best of his ability as military officer of the republic.

My father stayed on in the same service until May 1986. He lost day in the service was May 31, his 56th birthday. On that occasion, I remember him in Filipino suffer.

Twenty years from 20 years in the service. For only now realized that all our medals, ribbons and recognitions have no value at all. If I were to tell them all the money will not even buy us a good dinner."

Our family was not in Edsa during the four glorious days, but our roots are there, history. Everyone of us, particularly our brothers, did our share for Edsa. I firmly believe that my father's contributions counted the most. Glad God gave parents great fame.

Why the cannons did not fire at Edsa

by Napoleon C. Mendoza

(Last two parts)

Day 3, Feb. 24, 1986

AT A LITTLE PAST 5:00 A.M., I WAS awakened by the clanging of the telephone. It was my brother, Lt. Carlos B. Mendoza, the chief ordnance and bomb disposal expert of the Philippine Constabulary, because what he had to tell him was very urgent. They spoke for some 10 to 15 minutes.

Immediately, my brother and I sat down to breakfast. He looked haunted, worried and tired. I asked him what Windy said.

He said his father (General Ver) was very angry that the ammunition for the cannons had not been released. And Marcos was also quoting angry. I was asked if I had delivered him the shells. Otherwise, why he'll be charged for the phone orders."

I asked him what he told Peyda.

"I told him the truth, that I had an attack of high blood pressure, that I was feeling so dizzy so can could speak to me. He said he would send the surgeon general to see me and that I should sign the release orders," he said.

I asked if he would sign it.

Big decision

He replied: "You, there comes a time in so many of us when he has to think over hard and still about a big decision. Whether to sign, let the surgeon to."

The ordnance man arrived before 7 a.m. and was escorted in the living room. As soon as he saw my father come out of the bedroom, he stood up and executed a snappy salute. There he presented the release orders.

After working through the documents, my father said: "The signatures are not genuine."

The sergeant replied: "Sir, we could not contact the others are even by radio. However, the does not know. If they have defended already."

What would you do?"

My father said: "I'd like to ask you. If you were having problem in the situation, will you signal ordered by General Ver to do so?"

"I don't have to say it. I really don't know it," the sergeant answered.

"You're right. It's a difficult decision. You go back to Peyda and General Ver and tell them I refused to sign because the signatures are not complete. And if they have any beef left in them, they should not use the cannons against the people at Edsa."

The sergeant said: "Sir, I don't know if I can do that."

My father told him: "If you cannot do that, I'm your friend, then don't shoot yourself anymore because you will just become the Angel of Bataan anyway. You can go now because I will not sign that."

The sergeant stood up, saluted my father and left. He never saw that sergeant again.

As soon as he left, I asked my father, "Does this mean you will be joining the camp of Enrile and Ramos?"

He smiled and said: "Yes. I will just wait for a while and then I will go to Crame."

My father's decision was a big relief to the family.

At midday, President Marcos was shown on Channel 9. He instructed Secretary of Air war to use big firearms (referring to the howitzers) but only small firearms and then give to disperse the people at Edsa. When my father heard that, he laughed.

"Who is he kidding? Of course they cannot use the big firearms because the cannons have two dominant feet," he said.

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MESSAGES

Department of Tourism

[illegible]

[illegible]

JOSEPH E. ESTRADA
Secretary

PTA

[illegible]

ROBERT D. SANTOS
Executive Director

dti

[illegible]

PETER B. FINLLA
Secretary

[illegible]

ITSAM C. GISLANO
Chairman and CEO

ASIAN GEM AND TOURISM FOUNDATION, INC.

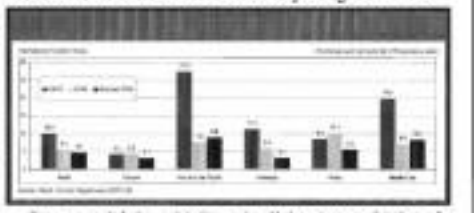
[illegible]

DELIA F. CLEMENTE
President

ASIA'S GEM - Gaming and Entertainment *plus* Leisure Expo-Conference Opens today

World Trade Center, February 22-23, 2006

Asia's lucky streak in tourism continues despite great odds



THE 2ND ZIPPED Asia-on-the-Go! hits a major recreational gaming, tourism, entertainment conference and exhibition that opens today at the World Trade Center.

Asia's Gem is a major international event with a simultaneous Gaming and Tourism Conferences. It is a one-stop shop of gaming, travel and tourism and entertainment business meeting featuring CEOs and CEO's of global corporations with business interests in the aforementioned industries. It is a showcase of the latest in gaming machineries and equipments, gaming related products and services, luxurious slots, golf, casinos, corporate and non-destinations, and new entertainment providers, and venues such as casino management center, booking offices among others.

It is remarkable how Asia's tourism industry manages to hold on to its lucky streak despite all the gloom and doom that it faced in the past two years and continues to face today. Terrorism, avian flu, SARS and even natural disasters in the Indian Ocean seemed failed to dampen the spirit of travelers to Asia.

According to the latest issue of the World Tourism Barometer, official newsletter of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), in 2005, 11 million of the staggering 42 million additional arrivals recorded worldwide were credited to Asia and the Pacific.

In contrast, growth remained in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in both affected and emerging tourism arrivals, underscoring the fact that among sectored industries worldwide, tourism continues to be a reliable performer when it comes to producing much needed revenues for governmental coffers. This has been made especially possible by the relatively low cost effective delivery of basic services to the people of any given region.

Hyper sensors high for sustained upward mobility in tourism arrivals this year. A close arrivals data has been noted so far this UNWTO in cooperation with the Fundación Premio Ortega y Gasset of the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid that the event are anticipated 6.5% growth in 2006.

Expected to be the fastest growing region in the world is that of Asia and the Pacific with a 9% average forecast.

Many factors contribute to this Asian Continental. Among these are the ever increasingly standard survey strategies applied to the logistic Campaigns such as "Amazing Thailand", "Malaysia – Truly Asia", "WOW Philippines", "Dynamic Korea" and "Instinctive Asia Chinese Discovery" have been chosen to effectively attract hordes of tourist visitors.

Speaker factor to the increasing awareness of the gaming-propelled aspect of tourism. Outbound travel for Asian gaming lovers is no longer new, as Asians, in many Asian countries, tradition and culture, place premium emphasis on the role of good fortune in their daily lives.

Thus, the industry visitors are now fully packaged in ultimate leisure or recreation vacation, complete with food and wines in spa, excellent amenities and facilities, and world-class entertainment elements with premium beverages and casino tracks available at their persons.

The single biggest casino in terms of revenues is Sands' Macau, bringing in more than $1 thousand visitors daily. Macau opened as the casino gaming capital of Asia as visited tourist arrivals of almost 20 million tourists last year, compared with 17 million in 2004. Gaming this with 1000+ tourist arrivals of 7 million then a definitive picture of gaming-propelled tourism becomes clear. The GDP of this special administrative region rose by 26 percent in 2005 from 2004 figures. 2004 was a sharp upward curve by its 2003 – 11 percent comparison.

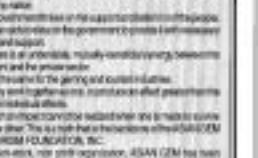
This is why travelers which can testify the need to come gaming in the past, such as Singapore and Thailand, are now looking into the industry as a way to boost their tourism industries.

Today, Singapore, is poised as a [illegible] resort facility, featuring gaming as a major attraction while the Thai government has recently endorsed the legalization of casinos in the kingdom.

Bringing the issue closer to home, the Philippine government, the republic Department of Tourism (DOT) has made increasingly visible to tourists and travelers, and would-be investors the need to [illegible] gaming and tourism.

Drawing the closing programme of the 21st Asian Tourism Forum (ATF) held in Davao City which ran from Jan 19-21 of this year, Department of Tourism Secretary Joseph Ejercito Estrada [illegible] "Casinos will be among the main attractions that the Philippines will package for tourists to attract more tourists from Asia. We'll be going strong to Asia for the rest, one of the secondary staple markets we'll try to develop along with Russia. Tourists from India are very keen on gaming."

Relative to this, Chairman Efraim Genuino of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR), promised to be the biggest promoter of Philippine tourism, once their "We have to remember our casinos is to be very open place to attract a complete gaming experience, but to be world-class tourist destinations as well. From the very architecture and interior design of our Casino Filipino branches to the many [illegible]



A VISION OF EXCELLENCE

PAGCOR Chairman and CEO Efraim C. Genuino in a tour with a field visitor and the willow-out it to Krishna.

Ever mindful that PAGCOR's mission includes the preservation of tourism, Chairman Genuino has embarked on a mission to elevate service to explore and develop tourism as espoused by both the government and the Filipino people, who are known as ever smiles in the house.

Asked about the way PAGCOR is positioned as the biggest promoter of Philippine tourism, Chairman Genuino states that as the sole Corporation in commercial, "PAGCOR has undergone a paradigm shift in the past few years – from mere gaming to total entertainment. In line with this, we have announced our casinos to be not just places to enjoy a complete gaming experience, but to the world class tourist destinations as well. From the very architecture and interior design of our Casino Filipino branches to the many personalized services which we provide and shows at night and casinos, we make all of these options and embody the richness of the unique Filipino culture."

Chairman Genuino is very much aware of and is a dynamic supporter of the latest global business trends regarding tourism and gaming.

He acknowledges how both industries were inexorably complimentary the operations of one another worldwide.

This is why the recent decision of PAGCOR into a "Global Corporation with a Global Mindset and a Filipino Heart."

One of the major issues he expects to accomplish this is the soft-the proposed projects, "Bagong Nayon Filipino Entertainment City Manila", which is not to be built on the prime reclaimed land along the former Roxas Boulevard and being in Manila Bay.

The Entertainment City Manila is a special economic tourism zone with 1 billion visitors annually from the three corporate tourism destinations accessible to the world, similar to what Las Vegas and Disneyland are doing it with the development of complementary with various themes such as Western Wonderland, Undersea Adventure and Tropical Rainforest. It will have five-star hotels, casinos, shopping malls and arcades, amusement parks, cultural facilities, and sports stadiums, among other features.

Chairman Genuino further says that it is PAGCOR's intention "to create a tourism zone that will be competitive with those found in other countries. This will be our contribution to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's masterplan for economic recovery. We hope to see the Philippines firmly established as a premier tourist destination and at the same time, become one of the most feasible economic worldwide."

In his capable hands and with his strong determination to succeed, we have every confidence that Genuino will become a major success than we think.

Meanwhile, the PAGCOR chief has a number of strong alliances with Asian and European firms, a tightly knit relationship based on cooperation and the pursuit of common interests. This is the rationale behind the signing of the first European-Japanese alliance will commence with the building of the first Asian GEM.

The Genuino-Sarsenas alliance effectively represent the common interest of the participants and upholds the principles of fair play and cooperation among them. It also seeks to provide leadership in addressing primary industry concerns such as social responsibility, corporate social responsibility and the industry's role in disaster, as well as issues affecting global investors in gaming and tourism. Likewise, it will provide services that will synergize tourism and gaming, ultimately contributing to the respective successes of its members.

ASIAN GEM AND TOURISM FOUNDATION, INC.

Building resources, tapping opportunities

THE PARTNERSHIP between the private sector and the government has always been a key feature in the socio-economic development plans of any nation.

A government minister or the support or stakeholders of the people. The private sector can use the government to provide it with necessary guidance and support.

There is an undeniable, mutually-beneficial synergy between the government and the private sector.

It is the same for the gaming and tourism industries.

They work together since, no one can ever afford pleasure from the ruin of their individual efforts.

Each of these sectors can be isolated when one is made to survive without the other. This is more than a mere theory as the [illegible] ASIAN GEM AND TOURISM FOUNDATION, INC.

A non-stock, non-profit organization, ASIAN GEM has been created to advance the government efforts in promoting responsible and good through the travel and tourism and gaming industries.

Headed by its president, Ms. Maryanne Delos Clemente, the focus of the Foundation is the building, upon resources and the fostering of opportunities to assist and maximize government efforts towards social and economic progress.

A multi-faceted organization, ASIAN GEM exists to enhance tourism industries in the Philippines and outside because of its belief in the capacity to be harnessed and which can bridge between various sectors and sectoral networks, particularly those from the gaming, travel and tourism, entertainment and leisure industries.

Moreover, ASIAN GEM will tap on over [illegible] and leisure industry background and the management and growth, aiming to be one of the dependable partners of the government in harnessing and realizing long-term business endeavors from the global community.

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Farmer on mountaintop witnessed landslide

By Volt Contreras

ST. BERNARD, SOUTHERN Leyte—Upland farmer Venancio Mirasol was standing only a few meters from the fractured chunk of Mt. Xan-Alegna when it suddenly broke loose under heavy rains and buried his entire village below.

He was clinging to a tree when he saw Barangay Guinsangan disappear in a raging flood of mud and boulders, including the school there building every 2200 pupils and teachers—for 13-year-old daughter Cherie and niece Sereina among them.

Four days later, the 50-year-old almost greater reserved on the spot where, he assumed, his family had vanished. Counting out his fist was the mist-topped mountain, its lush green scars sent down the middle by the brown bruise of last Friday's landslide.

With chin desperately serene (this) a backdrop, it was so though curiosity in a tragic play had held-way parted, crowding Mirasol's as a talking, military aside on stage.

Rescue workers near him squatted on a pile of rocks, apparently resting but not running. Determination for any signs of hope.

He was weeping by the time

GRIEVING farmer Venancio Mirasol is pictured on the very spot where he believes his house once stood in Barangay Guinsangan. Now, there's only rubble and mud and a gnawing pain over his loss. EDDIE MESINAS

journalists got to the site to ask him questions.

Mirasol's would-only give short answers—names, ages, a vague gesture, a nod or two. Grief, for this boring gathered, was much too raw, primal and brutal to be left unspoken here.

So monologue from this tragic figure just yes—for evidently the healing process has hardly begun for him and his ill-fated village, what with over 900 of its residents (or half of its population) still missing and believed to be entombed in the landslide.

With rescue operations still going on amid local government officials scrambling to concede that all is lost, this town has yet to find the tranquility it needs to jump its sorrows through a special Mass or a ceremony of collective burrowing.

As of yesterday, Philippine and US military choppers ferrying men and supplies to the rescue camps and evacuation centers continued to roar in the skies, reminding everyone that the search for the dead—or for survivors—was by "With a report from Edwin Bacasmas

Stories scarred survivors tell

From page A1

soon the need to buy food for his piggery that morning, with his wife Aydinia herself getting worried they would run have enough firewood to last the day.

So all the event in what turned out to be a "safe" part of the mountain to gather branches and twigs. He left the house 15 minutes later on his bicycle to buy a sack of rice (he's known from neighboring Barangay Canoan.

He was just leaving Guinsangan when he saw the mountain collapse. He recalled it being triggered by a quake and an explosion.

God's promise

The sight made him cry out to heaven in terror. "Elmor" Halipas or ang bwang panunukong Ibig Gali! Your promise has been fulfilled!).

Also severing as a Catholic layman since his Canoan, he's quoted as the verses bling spectacle made him sure those words in it instantly reminded him of the Biblical story where God had "promised to change the face of the Earth."

It was one of those verses he remembered with "the end of the world."

Retrospectively, the end never came for any member of his household: But city since his three grown-up children, all by his deceased first wife, were living in different parts of Leyte.

Still missing, however, were his two sisters, Sabina and Isabel, along with their families, including seven small children.

It is for them that he spends his idle hours at the evacuation center in search prayers he said, thanking the rosary in his right hand. He then pointed to his wife Fidelina, who is also active in their church as a catechist-in-her and who, since the evacuation, has worn her crucifix around her neck.

Whether it was through Venancio Mirasol's silence (the story at left) or the Nevis couple's unwitting bits of faith, coming to terms with a terrible loss may be this town's most arduous challenge—long after the remains of the dead in Guinsangan had given up. With a report from Edwin Bacasmas

Leyte Relief Fund Drive

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER is currently partnering with the League of Corporate Foundations (LCF), is providing assistance to the Southern Leyte landslide victims through the Corporate Network for Disaster Response. You may send your donations in cash or check to the INQUIRER office, Yuchengco Museum Street, Ortigas Center, Pasig or call the Corporate Relations office at 897-8000 loc. 2200.

No more sounds of life under mud up to 30 meters deep

From page A1

where some 250 pupils and teachers were feared buried after a monumental collapsed Friday and rearranged the Guinsangan village of 1,400 people with mud and boulders.

The governor's office put the death toll at 197, including 11 body parts found in different places. More than 900 are still missing.

Dr. Adelaida Arpon, a Department of Health official, found 93 dead.

Nevertheless, reports from the multinational rescue swarming the village some a day after—ten, Bonnie Lerma spoke of "increasing positive signs of life" being detected in the fog.

Lerma was referring to efficient field reports that "scratching" and then "faint movement tapping" were heard on Sunday and Monday with the help of sensitive instruments. A US officer also told the Inquirer that American troops had heard what they thought were "voices" coming from underneath.

Time to face reality

But yesterday, some rescue workers said it was time to face the truth that the missing must now be dead, Agence France-Presse reported.

"It is good to hope but relatives of those missing should by now already know the reality," the French news agency quoted Hector Bienvenu of the Philippine military unit mobilized for the rescue, said. "There are no more signs, so many helicopters coming from the island."

But Rene rescuer leader Capt. Roman Flores, at 9:15 p.m., refused Pantaleo's statement.

Not only were there "no signs (of life) so far," but the various teams had yet to see any part of the school building exposed despite their use of a backhoe over the past two hours, Flores said.

A more definitive assessment came from Lt. Cheng Tsung, commandant of the Taiwanese search and rescue team, which brought along some of the high-tech life detection instruments being used here.

Asked if his equipment incorporates whether their gadgets had picked up life indicators, he said: "So far there is no progress in those things ... in any sign of human beings alive."

'We'll keep on working'

On the victims' chances of survival five days after being trapped underground, he said: "It is not optimistic, but we'll keep on working and try to find people either alive or dead."

Maj. Gen. Rodolfo Tinnon, overall ground commander of the rescue operation, said he disagree had reached 10 to 15 meters deep in the area where the school was believed to be buried. He structure of the school had been found.

The village had been buried in 10 to 20 meters of mud and boulders, according to initial estimates.

Tinnon said rescue teams, hampered by sporadic rains, would try to work on a 24-hour basis if the weather permitted.

Prospects of finding life under mud were fading by the hour.

The rescue workers from four countries yesterday dug at a different spot from where they had earlier detected underground sounds earlier.

But ground-penetrating radar, capable of mapping structures up to 15 meters deep, found nothing.

The threat of more rain-triggered landslides slowed the search, as did confusion over where to dig and problems dealing with the wet mud.

Excavations had removed Monday at a section where the school was believed to have sat, with some troops, miners and volunteers digging on a terraced site, about 200 meters away from where the uncovered the school might have been located.

US thinkers, digging in shifts of 40 men, worked alongside Philippine troops and technical experts from Malaysia and Taiwan, but finally had to give up on the first site when the holes they created kept collapsing.

"So we'd dig deeper, we'd try to dig wider, but with the rain last night ... there were little landslides happening around us," said Lt. Jack Bailey, head of the Marine contingent. "The soil here is so unstable."

'We heard screaming'

It also was unclear if the wrenching, crippling noises and what seemed like voices that were heard Monday had come from survivors or just ground water or the mud settling.

"A few times we heard something, we think we heard something, because we really were trying to hear something," Bailey said. "If there is anything at all, we're going to get there."

Accurate information was hard to come by, too.

"Even the local population has kind of lost their bearings," Bailey said. "They don't have those sensors that are used to distinguish where something really is."

No giving up

No one has been pulled out alive since a few hours after the disaster struck.

Still, rescue workers refused to give up hope.

Under the glare of generator-powered lights, the multinational group used high-tech gear like seismic sensors and sound- and heat-detection equipment alongside shovels and rescue dogs.

They halted at around 3 a.m. yesterday and resumed work after daybreak.

Only a river

"We heard some sound but there was no sign of life," Taiwanese rescuer Benjamin Hong said. "We only heard the sound of the flowing river. We haven't heard any other like signs."

He said his team would continue checking at other sites around three separate hills of mud where the school was buried.

Joel Sitz, head of a rescue team of Filipino miners, said the mud was so deep that was there had yet to find the school.

"Today it is impossible to continue right now because of the rain," said US Marine Capt. Brent Partsen. "In fact, no survivors have been recovered. It's a sad deal."

The smell of rotting bodies wafted through the command post of the relief effort, one lifesaver near from the landslide site.

Asked why she was clinging to a hope that survivors would still be found in the buried school when most of the rest of the world appeared to have given up hope, Mayor Sheila Lim said: "Because I believe in miracles."

"We are waiting for a miracle to happen, we are not losing hope. The search for survivors continues," a grim-looking Lim told the Inquirer late night.

A team of geologists from the University of the Philippines and Ateneo de Manila University arrived yesterday with ground penetrating radar that could detect a human up to 15 meters below. With reports from Jaime Laurente, INQ Visayas Bureau, AP and AFP

80 Abanse! Pinay ...

From page A1

congress Women's Health Association at the St. Bernard open-air auditorium near the barangay hall in southern Leyte.

Governor Daisylene Dumagoing, Abanse! congressional candidate Perpetua Lim, described how the party-list group would have cyclone relief for evacuees. A simple lunch of yams, bananas and a pork dish, plus singing and dancing, a shot and lots of speeches.

Abanse! is always a jolly group, Dumagoing, 51, said of the 100 or so Abanse members whom she has seen during their national assembly in Cebu in October 2005.

"The women brought their children, who then played among themselves. It was a potluck affair and we had [rice cakes], lumpiang sariwa and juice. There was a lot of laughter because we had been cabin-mates up with intense rhumba, tango and dances to depict our role in the barangay," she recalled.

Dumagoing would have been among the casualties, but she was tied down with responsibilities as executive director of another women's group in Baybay, Leyte, a 3-hour bus ride away.

The celebration just dipped her mind. And the Abanse members had apparently forgotten to invite her as well; maybe because they were busy fine-tuning a project proposal on top of the anniversary preparations, she said.

Health initiatives

The group was behind health initiatives in Guinsangan, including the Women's Health and Safe Motherhood Project of the Department of Health and the local government unit.

It also managed the barangay health center, the Stellar ng Barangay, a cooperative, a social bonding program, a pig dispersal project and the Plan for Health (PLAN) maternity waiting shelter.

"They were always so active and talkative," said Beverly Capeda, Abanse chapter coordinator for Southern Leyte, who missed the conference because the computer at the group's office in Baybay had broken down.

She had to go home in Silago, three towns away, to finish the proposal herself.

Capeda, 56, had half her mind on the anniversary party at the capital town that Friday, fearing it was already 11 a.m., she thought: They should be starting at about this time.

And then she started receiving text messages from friends: Where was she? Was she all right?

Like family

Knowing that she hardly missed any Abanse event, they thought she was among the missing women Board banner also in the landslide.

She had wanted to be there, said Capeda, along with Mayor Sheila Lim, the barangay captain, and three of his councilmen, the wife of an agri-affairs official, a social welfare representative, and a consultant to organize Dole Adults.

Mayor Lim, who vows to deliver the promised rescue vehicle, had begged off at the last minute because she had to attend another meeting in her hometown.

She sent four of her staff members instead—three midwives and a health worker. Now they are all dead.

"They were like family to us," Capeda said of her missing colleagues, her voice breaking.

She organized the party-list group in Southern Leyte in 2000, and watched it grow into a strong presence in the barangays.

In 2001, the women organized themselves into the Guinsangan Women's Health Association to take on a DOH project funded by the European Commission.

They were a lively group, some of them members-for-life of their hometowns and mothers, said Capeda, a medical technologist turned social development worker who is also the executive director of the Southern Baybay Integrated Area Development Inc.

Only 30 left

So far, some of the women's bodies pulled from the mud has been identified.

Capeda noted that the rescuers had yet to start searching the six-hectare area. Or maybe some of the women had been buried with relatives others in the main grave, she said.

Of the members of Abanse Southern Leyte, only 20 are left—those who skipped the celebration for one reason or another, including a pregnant housewife who turns home to prepare lunch for her family, Dumagoing said.

But there's hardly time to grieve, said Capeda, who has been recruited to social worker mode.

Saturday morning saw her phoning her contacts, seeking assistance for the landslide survivors.

Generous response

The response has been most generous: scholarship grants for the children from Abanse!'s Cebu chapter, Libob Pilipinas; livelihood projects for the spouses through Dulaan; easy housing loans from the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in the Rural Areas.

Will those survive this tragedy?

"Yes, definitely!" Capeda said, stating the men had volunteered to take their wives' place to the party-list group and promised to continue what the women had started.

Although troubled, Capeda remained grounded: It was not the right time to talk about the organization. There's urgent work to be done."

Shabu mini market busted in Taguig City

By Jocelyn R. Uy

POLICEMEN YESTERDAY RAIDED A smaller version of Pasig's shabu mart in Taguig City based on a tip from a drug dealer.

Unlike Senior Insp. Rolando Obong, head of Taguig's Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU), said the drug den, which was composed of three shacks, was located across a creek in Bicos Bukid, Barangay Ibayo.

Unlike the Pasig raid which led to the arrest of over 200 people, no one was arrested in Taguig as the area, which the operatives stormed at 2:30 a.m., was deserted.

"We are 99 percent sure that the suspects were tipped off about the raid," Obong said.

Like the compound of shabu dens in Pasig City, the drug den in Taguig also had its own set of rules scribbled on walls: "Ang hihingi bawal ang kuha", "bawal ang pula dito" and "Pagsisi ng ang police ang dito."

Recovered from the compound were drug paraphernalia such as tweezers and pipes, aluminum foil, assorted lighters, scissors and five vials of methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu which, as of press time, were being examined at the police crime laboratory.

Obong said that to get to the drug den, one had to get on a boat which can carry seven people. It takes seven to 10 minutes to cross the creek, he added.

Obong observed that the area where "customers" headed from was very well lighted unlike the drug den under the bridge.

"It seemed that they deliberately made the street even looking the drug den bright so that they could see who ever is coming," he told the bosses.

Quoting a police informer, Obong said drug traders go to the compound, owned by a certain Kuya Cano, to get their drug supply for their customers. Drug users also frequent the area for pot sessions. "The police are going to crush months Cano," Obong added.

The Taguig Anti-Crime and Illegal Drugs Task Force, led by Councilor Henry Boston and the city's DEU, are keeping an eye on two more drug "hot spots" in the city, he said.

Revival of 'democracy walls' pushed

By Tarra V. Quismundo

LOOKING FOR AN OUTLET FOR FREE print opportunities?

We'll let it on this wall.

An official of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has pushed for the revival of "democracy walls"—perimeter walls of public and private buildings where people can post their sentiments, be they rants or raves.

MMDA Metropolitan Institutions Management Office (MIMO) Executive Director Lt. Romeo Evaluna made the proposal in a letter last month to MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando in a move to discourage vandalism in the metropolis.

"Democracy walls were conceptualized to minimize, if not totally eradicate, unsightly postings on walls and fences, including graffiti and illegal postings of messages anywhere in the area," Evaluna said.

The MMDA had designated democracy walls at 14 areas around the metropolis, including the National Statistics Office on East and Quezon Avenues in Quezon City, the Manila Central University near the Rizalista Monument Circle in Caloocan City, the Pasteur Mapúa-ten High School in Cubao, Quezon City; the Old Hospital in Mandaluyong City; and the San Carlos Seminary on Edsa in Makati City.

ABC-5, union talks end in deadlock; strike threat up

By DJ Yap

THE UNION OF TV NETWORK ABC-5 is in a deadlock with management over its Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), with the possibility of a strike looming in the horizon.

At the unfriendly celebrated its 14th anniversary yesterday, the ABC-5 Employees Union (ABCEU) appealed to management to listen to their demands, emphatically over "political" priorities, like security of tenure or employee protection, in the five-year CBA.

ABCEU president Carlos Zamudio said the union had filed a notice of strike with the Department of Labor and Employment, which would begin tomorrow. The deadlock resulted from a misunderstanding on contract terms that workers and management should go to the negotiation table as "social partners" unassisted by lawyers.

Management, however, insisted on lawyers being present during the negotiations to make it easier for both parties. If the standoff continues after the next week mandatory meeting period, the 393-strong union might last push through with a strike, Zamudio warned in a press conference yesterday in Quezon City.

Despite the threat of a strike, ABC-5's management reaffirmed its intention "to continue the CBA negotiations in good faith." A statement sent to the bosses said that management is committed to "a fair and speedy conclusion" of the negotiations.

"We still want to maintain the CBA negotiations in the earliest, reasonable possible time, so that together, we at ABC can channel all our energies to building a better, stronger television network," it added.

In response to the strike notice, ABC-5 management filed a petition for assumption of jurisdiction and certification for compulsory arbitration in the DOLE, if granted, it would give the agency authority over CBA talks.

METROBRIEFS

Prosecutor's son shot in the head

A SON of a Quezon City assistant prosecutor was shot in the head by two gunmen in front of his house on Monday, Andrew Lacuna, 23, son of Assistant Prosecutor Alexander Lacuna, is now in critical condition at the Quezon University Hospital. The police said the youngster was also shooting in front of his house on Odessa St., Barangay Kaligayahan in Novaliches at 6:30 p.m. as heinous men on motorcycles shot him. He was rushed to the Novaliches municipal hall before being moved to the PGH Hospital. PO2 Rong Gumboc said in a report, "He is now under observation. He's in critical condition but are we hopeful he'll make it." said the police. Gumboc did not elaborate further. The suspects reportedly got in a fight with the son and wanted to get even. So police investigators are now searching on a local gang who initiated the incident. Alexander Lacuna said he doubted if the shooting had something to do with his work job as a prosecutor. Lacuna has been not received any death threats.

BJ Yap

Alabang Skywalk project takes off

THE MUNTINLUPA City government plans to implement the Alabang Skywalk project, a covered, elevated walkway, from the CBD II of Muntinlupa Hotel, to connect the Alabang central and ultimately connecting with the Alabang Market and the Lucas Park. "The project is aimed at serving the Alabang it begin as a center for business and a viable commercial district by decongesting traffic in the area," Mayor Jaime Fresnedi said in an interview with the Manila. With eight escalators and a 19-foot security skill, the Skywalk will be a safe alternative for pedestrians who usually cross the busy thoroughfare under the Alabang viaduct. Fresnedi added. It will also be lined with food and shopping stalls. The P270-million project, which is expected to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority in a memorandum with mayors last week, will be shouldered by a private company, Hall Taisa and Associates, said Fresnedi. He expressed optimism that work on the project can begin in June once it is approved by the National Economic and Development Authority.

Jocelyn R. Uy

Students' exposure to mercury probed

SEVERAL students of a school in Pateños City have declared a week-long holiday to allow health officials to investigate the alleged exposure of students and teachers to mercury last week. Eleven freshmen students of Pateños City School of Arts and Trades (PCSAT) in Poblacion National Hospital (PNH) after they showed signs of mercury exposure following a science experiment on Thursday, Dr. Olga Velarde, City Health Office (CHO) head, said the students yesterday. The students developed skin irritation or rashes. According to Velarde, the teacher was discussing mercury with 60 students when some of them started playing with the chemical which was in separate beakers. Mercury, instead of it to spill. Four of the affected students were discharged from the hospital yesterday. The CHO, the CHO, Pateños and the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) are investigating the incident while blood samples of students in an area threatened of exposure, said Velarde. Health officials, researcher, police and students' teachers, other school staff and even residents who might have witnessed might been exposed to the substance to report symptoms such as vision impairment, numbness, lack of coordination of movements, muscle weakness, skin rashes, mood swings and memory loss.

Jocelyn R. Uy

Kin raise questions about McDo shooting

TWELVE weeks after the shooting incident at the McDonald's restaurant on Taft Avenue that left two of its managers dead, the family of the male fast food manager who allegedly shot his superiors remains doubtful about the manner of his death. "We could not believe that he could kill his superior and commit suicide," Jo Pastor said of her cousin, Lorie Pastor, who allegedly shot Mr. Ronald Lumagpas. Dino Fernandez, a law minister, before a brief meeting on Feb. 3. As said the suicide and his murder were not evidence, and that Pastor was "not capable of his friend." In also pointed out that the post-mortem on Pastor yielded negative results. Meaning that her cousin may not have fired the gun. Investigators at the Manila Police District Homicide Section, however, said there are various cases of homicide-victims who also tested negative for gunpowder traces.

Marjuee C. Dizo

Seminar on prayer meetings

THE BOARD of Pre-School Development (PDS), a co-Headquarters of Christian communities, prayer or worship groups to a one-day seminar-workshop on "Leading Prayer Meetings Effectively." The facilitator is Efren Lakandula, a leader of the long Lagaway Pamplona Community and former PDS executive director. The seminar will be held on Saturday, Feb. 25, from 8:00a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Lions Pentecostal Foundation Room, 8th Mezzanine, 8th Mercedes St. Jesus Artist, Lagaway Village, Bacoor. Fee is P500. For reservations, please call or text Ms. at 0905-345-6400/08.

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NBI holds 4 vans with explosive loads

By Pinglue C. Ortiz

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) intercepted four container vans carrying explosive materials at the Manila North Harbor yesterday afternoon, a day after its top official placed the bureau on red alert status.

NBI Special Task Force (STF) Regional Director Reynaldo Esmeralda said the container vans contained 1,200 cubic of dynamite, 252,000 kg of ammonium nitrate, 7,500 pieces of electric blasting caps, 7,500 pieces of non-electric blasting caps, 3,750 pieces of connectors, 375,000 pieces of ordinary blasting caps, 375,000 meters of safety fuse, and 75,000 meters of detonating cord.

Esmeralda explained that NBI officer in charge Eliseo Mamaril had issued a memorandum order on 09/22/06 directing all agents and special investigators to be on alert following reports of a possible coup attempt against the government.

"We have constantly been receiving reliable intelligence reports about a possible coup d'état against the administration by some disgruntled elements of the military, especially the Magdalo soldiers, and members of the 'Young Officers Union of the New Generation,'" Esmeralda said.

He added that Islamic operatives and members of the Manila Police District Explosives and Ordnance Division conducted yesterday's operation at the two Manila piers in connection with the red alert directive.

According to Esmeralda, they had received a call from an informant regarding the large volume of ammonium nitrate, a major ingredient in bomb-making materials, used as a soil nutrient and mango flower inducer, that was supposed to be shipped to Iloilo, Cebu, Davao Mindanao province.

The NBI official said they intercepted the 40-footer and three 20-footer container vans at the two piers.

"The shippers failed to produce documents permitting them to transport such dangerous materials," Esmeralda said, adding that they would subject the cargo to verification procedures.

While ammonium nitrate could be used as fertilizer, the presence of blasting caps showed the substance could be used for dynamite fishing, he pointed out. "We relate such illegal fishing groups using dynamite and ammonium nitrate as explosives to Ebdane," Esmeralda, adviser Governor Vilma Ebdane, regional director said.

Police chief out of EPD in 'minor' reshuffle

By Leiza A. del Puerto and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

NEARLY TWO WEEKS AFTER THE DISCOVERY of a compound of shabu restaurants in Pasig City, the chief of the Eastern Police District (EPD) has been relieved.

Police authorities, however, did not say if Chief Supt. Oscar Valenzuela's removal was a result of the discovery on Feb. 10 of the "shabu dens" in Brgy. Maybunga in Barangay Ilaya. Instead, less than a billionaire many from the Pasig City Hall and the EPD headquarters.

His relief, according to a police statement, was part of a minor reshuffle involving nine officers in the Philippine National Police.

Chief Supt. Charlemagne Mojarrieles, former deputy chief of the Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management, has been appointed as Valenzuela's replacement.

The EPD is in charge of maintaining peace and order in the cities of Marikina, Pasig, Mandaluyong and the town of San Juan.

Still no word from compound owner

Meanwhile, the Pasig City government has yet to get in touch with the owner of the lot where the shabu laboratories were found. City Legal Officer Carlos Bautista said that until yesterday, the owner had yet to talk to them.

"We will recommend the inclusion of the owner of the lot in the charges to the Philippine National Police," Bautista said.

Pasig City Mayor Vicente Eusebio also said they were thinking of going to court in order to confiscate the property, where he plans to build a "drug rehabilitation center."

Two land title-covering parts of Sitio Maybunga in Barangay Ilaya, Tomas had been surveyed to contain more than Barangay.

Abenasin sent Barangay a letter on Feb. 14 to inform him of, and invite him to, the demolition of the shabu dens" composed of several shanties—on his private lot, which pushed through on Feb. 21.

Although the letter was received by Barangay's friends, he has yet to send a reply.

Based on copies of the land titles given to the reporters, Barangay bought the lot from the Antos family in August 2005.

Not members of the Antos family owned the lot from 1993 until the land title was transferred to Barangay's name last year, according to records from the City Registry of Deeds.

Eusebio mulls libel rap vs rival

Eusebio also lashed back at his political rival, Rep. Roberto Ancerotti, who had linked him to the operation of the drug dens.

"We are studying the filing of libel charges against him," he told reporters.

He said the allegations against him were plain politicking as he showed copies of an alleged manifesto being circulated in the city supposedly urging Ancerotti to run for mayor next year.

The manifesto, in the form of a signature campaign addressed to Ancerotti, was signed by politicians, many of whom lost in local elections in 2004.

Eusebio said he received a copy of the manifesto from the other side's camp.

"Look at the timing," he said. But the mayor did not discount the possibility of running for reelection next year.

There are talks that Ancerotti and Eusebio's son, Bobby, are both aiming for the mayoral post next year.

Drug nets for police operatives

In another development, eight police drug operatives in the Caraballo (Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas, Valenzuela) area have been ordered to be tested for drugs.

Northern Police District Director Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil said the drug test, which will be administered in the district's Anti-Illegal Drugs team, is a preventionary measure to "tune up the anti-crime of the anti-drugs campaign."

"A drug test must be conducted within 24 hours for all operatives on the rose and give operatives the moral ascendancy in doing their jobs," Bataoil said in his order to the head of the team, Chief Insp. Bong Teraña.

Bataoil said he is withdrawing unverified reports of illegal drug dens operating in the Caloocan area.

He urged barangay officials and residents, meanwhile, to immediately report to local authorities any illegal activity in their area.

"A similar situation as that in Pasig City, where illegal drugs were openly sold and used for years, must not be tolerated," Bataoil said. With Nancy C. Carvajal

EDSA I 20

FEBRUARY 22, DAY ONE

By PDI Research

Editor's Note: The following chronology was distilled from books and PDI archives, about events leading up to what has been called the "road" (Valte.)

FEBRUARY 22, 1986/DAY ONE

Midnight

Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile and key aides finalize Enrile's operation plan which provides himself band of 47 rolling packs after rebel troops led by the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) accept Malacañang. Himself is planned for Feb. 23 at 2 a.m.

2 a.m.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Fabian Ver fortifies Polaris, leaving been informed when pending coup for Maj. Gregorio Honasan of the Presidential Security Command.

Honasan was tapped by RAM as emissary to go to the Palace and be later overheard by his commander, Col. Rodolfo, son of the ex-VP chief, and agreed to become a double agent.

3 a.m.

As a morning at Enrile's Bonnet Bay house in Makati, RAM chief Col. Gregorio Honasan learns that a Marine battalion is positioned broadly at rebels' planned point of attack.

9 a.m.

De Ver's instruction: Alternative Commander officer Col. Rolando Abadilla travels talk Honasan out of any instructions.

10 a.m.

Honasan learns that more soldiers are being deployed to guard Palace. Trade Minister Roberto Ongpin asks Enrile to say that his 3 financially since have been arrested. Enrile won the because three were on loan from him and knew of coup plot.

Noon

In Malacañang, President Marcos meets with US Ambassador to the Philippines Stephen Bosworth and Philip Habib. US President Ronald Reagan's "double-diverter." The two Americans were exploring political crisis and push for Ver's removal from office.

Honasan and Lt. Col. Eduardo Kapunan go tee at Enrile's house; they tell him of rebels' to round up all members of their movement. Defense Selling in Dagupan Valley and regrouping for possible stand-off. Enrile chooses the latter and tells everyone to go to Camp Aguinaldo.

12:45 p.m.

Capt. Rolando Morales, one of Honasan's security officers, conveys the Palace defenses and attempts to withdraw. Honasan is sensitive Presidential Security Unit armory. He is accosted and becomes the first of two alleged assassins unmasked by Marcos forces. The others are Maj. Rodolfo Aromin, Lt. Col. Jake Malapaciao and Maj. Hilario Bi-Kimbo.

2 p.m.

Before boarding his plane out of Manila, Habib told a US Embassy officer to tell Bosworth that Aquino wins the election and "deserves our support. Marcos is finished, and we ought to offer him asylum in the US."

Enrile and RAM decide how to cover up their coup plot in order to drum up support for themselves. Enrile calls AFP chief Gen. Fidel Ramos, who declares his full support.

3 p.m.

Honasan gives signal to prepare his armor for combat. He, Enrile and Kapunan fly to Aguinaldo in a chopper.

3:30 p.m.

At Aguinaldo, Enrile's guards bring out brand-new M-16s, Uzis and Galils. Enrile orders troop deployment around Camp Crame. On the phone, he tells his wife Cristina to call Malacañan founding chair Eugenia Apostol to appraise her of what's happening and request her to inform Jaime Cardinal Sin.

4:30 p.m.

Brig. Gen. Rolando Abaya's Regional Unified Command No. 9, which includes First Lady Imelda Marcos' native Leyte, expresses support for the rebels—the first military region to do so.

5 p.m.

Unaware of unfolding events, Ver and Imelda attend wedding of a general's son at Villamor Air Base. Ver is stunned when told Marcos calls his three children to Malacañang. Enrile tells Sen. "I will be three-quarters of an hour. I don't want to die ... If it pains you, do something. I don't like to live."

6 p.m.

Ramos arrives in Aguinaldo after dialogue in his Alabang house with group called Coty Crusaders.

6:45 p.m.

Ramos and Enrile hold press conference to announce withdrawal support from Marcos. They say they are not out to seize power but to return it to the people in the person of Cory Aquino, whom they recognize as the rightfully elected President.

They have less than 300 men and no air, armor or artillery equipment.

Ramos moves to Crame across the street from Aguinaldo. Former AFP chief of staff Gen. Fabian Ver, Brig. Gen. Ramon Farolan and Philippine Constabulary chief Brig. Gen. Fidel Singson arrive at Aguinaldo.

THE DEFECTS: In Camp Aguinaldo, Enrile and Ramos declare their break from Marcos despite having only 300 men at the time and with no air, armor or artillery equipment.

7 p.m.

Marcos remains in Palace study room with Fabian and Irene Ver and Information Minister Gregorio Cendaña.

8:15 p.m.

Ver orders military intelligence chief Brig. Gen. Fidel Singson to death by Basilio Ventus. Singson deploys wounded soldiers there not to take offensive action. He evacuates to join Ramos-Enrile forces.

9 p.m.

Enrile radio phone conversation with Ver, with both adversaries agreeing not to attack tonight.

9:30 p.m.

Col. Antonio Galvez of Air Force Club Geber offers warplanes at the attack helicopters at Villamor in support of defectors.

10 p.m.

Radio Ver-Ver conference with Mme. Ver, Ver accused of rebellion. Enrile and Aquino, who is rumored in the Carmelite convent in Cebu City, have brief phone conversation (Aquino had known of Enrile's coup plans.)

In Malacañang, Imelda tells reporters of plot to kill her and Marcos at 12:30 a.m.

10:30 p.m.

August Twenty-One Movement's Agapito "Boy" Aquino, despite the group's decision to wait, throws his support behind rebels and calls on civilians to be ready for the same steps most taken in Cebu preparatory to marching to Edsa.

(Shortly after Boy's Radio Veritas, this calls for public support of Enrile and Ramos.

10:30 p.m.

Marcos announces over government-owned Channel 4 that he is in total control of situation and calls on Enrile and Ramos "to stop this stupidity and surrender so that we may negotiate." He repeats the broadcast of an attempt on his life by one of Imelda's bodyguards in a conspiracy involving Enrile and Ramos and their proclivity to prevent the alleged assassins, Abadilla, who made a supposed confession.

Ramos and commanders of Bataflu, a must-make coalition, are first to form humanitarian rosette around Crame. Supporter Nora Aunor arrives at Edsa.

Food rations are being to responses to the rebels suspend that while they are ready to die for country, they have no food for the troops.

11 p.m.

Imelda tells Marcos over Radio Veritas: "Enough is enough, Mr. President. Your time is up. Do not misunderstand our strength now."

Kris Aquino, then disco-bopping, is found after hastily rescued and reunited with her mother, both are taken to Carmelite convent.

11:30 p.m.

Ver orders planes and water lines at Aguinaldo and Crame cut, but he is ignored.

Ground of Edsa rumble.

Officials who withdraw support for Marcos: Lt. Col. Jerry Albano and his Security and Escort Battalion of 300 officers and men. **(To be continued)**

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THE PEOPLE

The girl who didn't go to the mall

By May R. Vargas

UNTIL NOW I WAS WONDERING what would drive a 7-year-old girl to a ramshackle sorority like Edsa 1.

My mother was apprehensive about letting me go with my father, letting me with going to the mall instead.

But there was something about me to her that's eyes, just as an overbearing elder's in our community, that made me stand my ground and say what I wanted to go to Edsa, no matter how regardless would was to me then.

So I boarded one of the jeepneys that our neighbors arranged for that special event.

Ours was a small barangay in the heart of Las Piñas which, according to my father, was never covered by Marcos's band of despotic soldiers.

One of my first hit from among his books was from the famously amazing community gangs would team up to escape the soldier's guns and candles, or to some extent, actually chase them and give them a dose of their own medicine.

And so with apparent learning in their hearts, the men and the women rushed that road that led to Luneta to show the Filipino people, as one unit, to end their long hiding against the dictator who in fourteen years have had stolen the Filipino people's wealth, and tortured thousands of freedom fighters and activists.

Before was the dominant color that day and even our journey was suddenly festooning with yellow banners, adorned instantly by people who were only too eager to use it but most people had none.

I also remember having to lie flat on the jeepney's floor because even before we could take off, many flew in our direction, hitting some of my neighbors in the head. My father had me go with another family and he came into us at by the barricade and set him free.

I was totally unaware of what was really happening but the energy emanating from the crowd kept me wanting to be within the crowd as not to be dangerous it might be for a young girl.

But my father came later to drive me, noticing it appealing to my yearning to be part of history.

With very little understanding yet of what I was seeing, I saw men blasting and being carried away to ambulances on stretchers. I remember me feet being lifted from the ground, carried off to this point and time.

I was scared to hell but the people's movement had a rhythm one doesn't see break away from. The crowd was pushing, pulling, chanting and waving as if drunk with some intoxicating elixir. A song united everyone and I remember singing that song on and off a few days, weeks and even years after.

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Almonte tips off Cory camp on coup

Kumpaya at 1

for a civil disobedience campaign in a massive rally at the Luneta. There, she presented a seven-point strategy that included the boycott of products and establishments owned by Marcos cronies. The rallies were a nationwide strike on Marcos's crowning on on Feb. 26.

But Edsa was already a more active and potent waiting going on in the armed Forces. A coup d'etat had been in the works by the Reformist Armed Forces Movement or RAM. Its plans had been finalized and the soldiers were set to go.

Enrique Almonte himself had been in contact with the RAM leaders like Honasan and Eduardo Gregorio "Gringo" Kimpang, Vic Batac and Red Kapunan.

Ruling junta

The RAM meetings gave Cojuangco insights into the unrest within the military. It also gave him an idea of the mind-set of these soldiers.

"I think we agreed that we were fighting [for] the same cause. But [his] idea was for a revolutionary government headed by a junta," Cojuangco told.

It was to be composed of Aquino, her vice presidential candidate Salvador Laurel, Cardinal Jaime L. Sin, Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, Gen. Fidel Ramos and former Executive Secretary Alex Melchor.

"I don't know why Melchor was included. Anyway, this was the idea and we would talk about it for hours and hours in my house or in prearranged meeting places. We would talk till the wee hours of the morning," Cojuangco said.

"Sometimes I asked them, 'Why do we have to go into a junta? We have a government and we have friends there. We, Mr. Juan. That would cause trouble.'

"But they were firm about it. It must be a junta first. Then we will draw up a constitution and have an election in one years later. That was their proposal and I firmly disagreed with it. I didn't want our country to be a banana republic. We do it this way, we are no better than some of the Latin American countries. And our rules would go round and round. And we never really reached a conclusion, ever."

Strange relationship

The meetings would begin a strange relationship between RAM and the Marcos opposition. A flare of trust had already developed. RAM had provided additional security for Aquino during the election campaign.

Almonte wanted Aquino to stay at the Cojuangco residence on Palm Avenue in exclusive Dasmariñas Village, Makati.

"I was immediately read a battalion of Marines from their district to encircle the entire area," he told Beping. "They can quickly work in to secure Cory."

Cojuangco immediately called Aquino and suggested that the trip to Cebu be called off. But Aquino was adamant. "We already gave our word," she said.

Cojuangco called Almonte and told him about Aquino's decision. Almonte proposed a backup plan. "OK," he told Cojuangco. "If that is the case, I'll send my personal security there for her." He gave Cojuangco a contact—a colonel—in Cebu.

They were about to leave on Feb. 21, a Friday, when Lt. Jose Ramos-Shaw, Aquino's godson and chief security officer of Masinloc, Zambales, paid a visit. Almonte was nervous about her leaving and explained why.

"He wasn't a RAM member but he already knew about the plot and was part of it," Cojuangco said. "He told me, 'We move on Sunday, 2 a.m.'"

But nothing that Aquino was set on leaving. Almonte, the group's mastermind on what she would do once RAM moved. Once the rebels attacked Malacañang, Aquino was to be kept hidden in Cebu until 9 a.m. Sunday. If things went right, the Reyes would have been taken care and rescued by the soldiers led by Ileto. He would immediately call Cojuangco once the coast was clear so she could return to Manila.

What to do if the coup failed?

He didn't see what she should do then.

The first reports of the Enrile-Ramos break were came while Aquino's historic campaign was under way in Cebu.

Phone call to Enrile

In the hustle of a supporters, Aquino managed to call Enrile at Camp Aguinaldo. Their conversation was brief. Aquino offered prayers for Ninoy. But Cojuangco was thinking that Aquino's call by was for more in his mind.

"There are places they would go to but it was up to Cory to decide. Blaise Perlas, the Aquino consul general in Cebu, had paid a visit and with instructions from US Ambassador Stephen Bosworth offered the security of a US Navy frigate to Cory until the crisis had passed," Cojuangco said.

"I talked with her. Just the two of us," he said. "I told her, 'We have three choices. One: you will stay here in Cebu and accept the offer of the navy frigate for your safety. Two, they (Marcos's men) know our movements here so we fly to Mindanao ... Do it fast! Or fly back to Manila."

Staying with the downtrodden was, for Aquino, a "bad image" to the people. Running away from trouble was far from her mind. "We go back to Manila," she said.

Connect as refuge

"To avoid her in a monastery like Convent of the Holy Rosary and the heart day ... Cory was already important to know but I told her to wait."

Cojuangco was reading for his RAM contacts for assurances that RAM could rescue Aquino. He was told that it was not possible.

While Aquino and the leaders of the opposition had held a press conference at the Marina Hotel, Beping was in a room briefing the two pilots who were to fly them to Manila.

Instantly for Aquino in Manila soon became the greatest reunion for the opposition once people began to gather at Edsa. She and her companions stayed at her sister Josephine's house at Wack Wack in Mandaluyong, awaiting developments. But Aquino wanted to go elsewhere.

"She went on radio and called on the people to be there," Beping remembers. "It was then I realized that Cory wanted to go to Edsa."

Cojuangco remembers that Colonel Almonte had told him not to bring Aquino to Edsa because it was dangerous.

"There were snipers all around and she could get killed. When I told her about this and was trying to convince her not to go, she told me, 'I invited the people that I wouldn't go? Back.'"

Edsa appearance

A severe spot was chosen for Aquino to make her appearance. It was at the corner of Ortigas Avenue and Edsa, where the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) building sits. At that time, the only buildings in the area tall enough for snipers to see the Streamers and Exchange Commission office and a few more streamers further down Edsa.

It soon led for Cojuangco's right-hand man, Tonong Mendoza, made a security sweep of the surrounding buildings and found no escape route in case of trouble. But the arrangements were taking time and it wasn't long before Cojuangco found to impatient Aquino.

Beping of Edsa was Aquino's immediately thought. She stormed out to a parked car in the driveway and ordered the driver to go to Edsa.

Cojuangco was right behind her. The driver looked at Aquino, then at Cojuangco, waiting for the cardes. This time, it was the younger brother who gave the final order. He gave the driver a firm head shake. Aquino had to wait. She walked back to the house. It would take a bit more time before Cojuangco would give the go-signal to go to Edsa.

At 6 p.m., Feb. 24, Aquino made her first appearance with the people at Edsa since the revolution began. A makeshift stage was set up on the front steps of the POEA building along with sound systems.

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THE PALACE

Marcos would not leave; his family refused to leave him

Front page A1

the USS M. Chaffee, the USS Sacramento, the USS Oldendorf and the USS Fuller were "anchored in the US navy base."

US Secretary of State George Schultz said the US forces "should maintain relationships over the horizon to protect the US bases in the Philippines." The reinforcements came from the ships of the US 7th Fleet.

Transition government

But against whom or what was the US being pressured?

The questions must have been answered in part by the reports of Labor Minister Blas Ople and Acting Foreign Minister Pacifico Castro, who were sent to Washington on Feb. 20 to confer with White House officials.

The reports clearly indicated that Marcos "should give way to a transition government."

If Marcos refused to leave Malacañang, would the Marines of the US 7th Fleet have bombed him out?

With the elements of the US state department obviously geared to remove him from office, at least physically, Marcos still believed that his old friend, President Ronald Reagan, would help him.

But Schultz presented no alternatives. He said that if Marcos stayed and controlled the government through military force, "the next police state imposed by Marcos would destroy the ability of [General] Ileto and the Church to provide a democratic alternative to the communists. So we don't want that to happen."

That was the person Schultz drew in order to assure Reagan that the best anti-only solution was to offer Marcos "honor, treatment" once Marcos was taken out and brought to the United States.

It must be noted here that Schultz's "talking point" was explicit: America would "welcome" Marcos, period.

Washington prepared the procedure for Marcos's departure with Schultz directing the operation.

Schultz said: "The Marcos era has ended. Marcos can no longer govern effectively. An effort by him to retain in power by military force will destroy the democratic alternative to the communist. The US must find a way to support the democratic forces for change and to treat Marcos with respect and courtesy. We should be ready to bring him to the US."

Lunch

Marcos had very little sleep over the past days.

On Feb. 23, at around 3 a.m., he called Lunch at least 2 p.m. on Feb. 24 in Washington.

The two men had become quite close.

Lunch's first trip to the Philippines was in 1944 under Gen. Douglas MacArthur, as a 22-year-old Army medic attached to the 7th Division. He was part of the frontline forces that liberated the island of Leyte.

His second trip to the country was in October 1985, when he met with Marcos.

With Lunch's introductions about his war experiences, he and Marcos established a common ground of sentimental memories.

They met for two consecutive days, with Ramos attending one of the meetings.

Lunch recalled in connection: "President Marcos conveyed that when she called Mrs. Reagan after the Palace was bombed, Nancy said: 'Come at once to the United States. We will protect you here.'"

Inside sentenced, "I will be last person to leave the Philippine Sector"

'Cut and cut cleanly'

But the die was cast. There was the parking that had to be done, and the also had to think into the preparations for the President's oath-taking that was scheduled for the morning.

She had her white name prepared and suggested that her two daughters should also be dressed in white Filipiniana gowns. Strangely did not change out of his soldier's camouflage uniform.

Marcos was even more alarming Tagalog.

Senator Lunch called at 8 a.m., barely two hours after Marcos' phone call.

Marcos asked whether President Reagan wanted him to resign, and Lunch replied that he was not in a position to make that kind of representation.

Marcos asked him what he should do. The senator said it would be to the best interest of all if Marcos left.

"Cut and cut cleanly. The time has come," Lunch said.

Marcos was silent for the longest time, and the senator could hear him breathing.

Marcos replied: "Yes... I am in my very deep pained." And then he hung up.

"It is important to understand, too," Lunch wrote in his memoir, "that [Marcos] didn't believe he was going to have to leave the country when he agreed to leave the Palace. He thought he was going home to northern Luzon."

Oath-taking

Sotheland Marcos and Imee Valentin had actually taken their oaths of office as President and Vice President, respectively, inside the Study Room on Feb. 25. They took their oath before Chief Justice Ramon Ponce Enrile. Some hours after the Ramos/Arroyo officially proclaimed them as the winners of the Feb. 7 snap election.

The public oath-taking on Feb. 25 was purely ceremonial and for the benefit of "live" media coverage. It was scheduled for 9 a.m. but was cut off the air. Rebel soldiers had taken over the then re-roaming TV channel that was broadcasting from Malacañang, and the microwave facilities were unplugged. They had captured the government station earlier and prevented any "live" broadcasts from the Palace.

Final appearance

After the oath of office at the Ceremonial Hall at 10 a.m., the Marcoses made their final appearance before the people who had waited anxiously at the Palace grounds.

The First Family walked to the Malacañang Building, which was connected by a private passageway to the Palace, and appeared on the balcony.

Marcos waved to the crowd and cheered his forces. There was thunderous applause and cheers of "Marcos, Marcos, Marcos pa rin!"

He was a portrait of pain. His address was flawed with emotion, but by the end the cynical knowing of the crowd shattered his words. He pleaded for sobriety and calm, tolerance to the best of one, and promised that "we will overcome this crisis."

He gave a message of peace from the heart, of losing his life and his house all over again, "for the salvation of his country and his people."

The crowd waited for a call to arms, but it never came. They would have rallied behind him, willingly given their lives for him had he so much as hinted it.

'Dahil Sa Iyo'

Imelda sang her signature song, "Dahil Sa Iyo," her voice choked by tears, her face masked with sadness.

There came a verse in her voice that could not be contained. It spilled across her quivering lips, the feigned smile, and the vanquished look.

No one held moment, she looked scared. And then she wailed, opened her right palm and blew a kiss.

The events of the past days were beyond her control. When the inevitable time for departure approached, she must have been unprepared to leave, or perhaps she just been done enough to not care what awaits her.

Except for the clothes of money, two cases items were left behind. Only hours later, the media in search of jewelry and piles of documents would be astounded.

In a future affidavit, Marcos wrote: "While I am grateful to President Reagan for his hospitality in providing my family and my associates a safe haven, feeling brought to Hawaii was not a choice of mine. It was on orders of the United States government at the highest levels and really inconsistent with my intentions then and my desire now to be in my own country."

Marcos as mother

Imelda's summary of her departure revolved around the time that they crossed in the dark of the Palace toward the helicopter that flew them out of Manila.

The words of her husband: "This is all your fault, Imelda," had been remembered.

"Marcos added that it was because I gave him a bad wife," Imelda recalled. She said this because Marcos did not attach the rebels now "because I made him a murder, like me, who can love her children even if they had done something wrong. In fact, that was his closing statement. He offered his life and his social honor to save his people because I gave him a beast."

See what is Imelda's "heart" like?

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Sugar Barons set out for first-ever double

By Mussing R. Cardiño

DAVAO CITY—THE BIGGEST motivations seem simple enough for Canlubang.

The most dominant team in the Philippine Amateur Interclub swings into action for a first-ever two-division sweep as it seeks payback when the back nine and the "Asian" of the Sugar Bowl in the regular men's tournament is unveiled.

"Of course, winning again is the primary target," team skipper Luigi Trio said. "But after running the Interclub century last week, our prime motivation is to get for country."

The Sugar Barons, owners of 22 regular men's titles, won the division for 55 years old and above for the first time on Saturday.

And they will have to do it without one of the most familiar, if not the most dominant, figures in the team—Arnie Bagtasnas—for with a CHMO that has a nasty tab of positional opposition.

Former JAP Amateur champ Jun Sierak will spearhead Canlubang in the first round of championship division play at the up-and-down Baguio Palm Garden here.

National Caddies' Open products and team rookies Joseph and Mario Labado, JE Tampinco and Jerome Tomicampos will debut for the Sugar Barons before action shifts to one of the toughest tests in local golf—Apo Golf Club—tomorrow.

Sierak—the Head, JEP team anchorman Jay Bacani, Bowe Sarmiento, rookies Josel Abalos and Rhod Fernandez complete the Canlubang roster.

"I wish Canlubang all the luck," said Pardy Lucas, captain of defending champion Southwoods. "Definitely, it's a formidable team. But we will defend our title the best way we can."

Lucas said yesterday that team leaders have not made up its mind on who will open their title

SUGAR, A-20

PBL Interclub chair Domingo Chanrai hits the ceremonial drive at Apo Golf and Country Club in Davao as the start of the event's regular tournament today at Palm Ver Bay.

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Araneta amazes for NCR; Iloilo, Negros blank foes

True blue Gordon bats for La Salle this time

By Cesiel R. Tupas
PBA Images Bureau

QUEZON CITY—ASHWIN CHUAN ANANDA, FREDERICK MYLES EBONDO and the football field of Buenas Marea town. He was making his presence felt elsewhere.

But for Westminster yesterday, he stood out in the pitch where the finest players of the country started their careers.

Seeing action for title defenders National Capital Region, the 20-year-old dynamo put on a show on his homecoming, finishing in two goals in a 6-1 victory over Region 6 at the start of the 2005 National Men's Open Championship tourney.

"I just sing along with the older players in town, so I was never really the king of the field," said Araneta, of the Philippine Air Force, who is actually one of 12 players in the NCR team who had from Buenas Marea; the country's football hotbed about 20 km from Iloilo.

"They taught (players) and I played well today."

Spanish midfielder Luis Lozano started the scoring for NCR, right at the opening minute, before Araneta's header off a Brad Gorez cross in the 5th minute made it 2-0.

The rally NCR strikes broke loose from an offside trap and beat the Region keeper on a one-on-one play in the 30th minute.

Another first-time from homer, Simbo Calagui headed off Ingrio three minutes from time with a left-footed rocket outside the box, after Imrihlin El Habib, one of three Sudanese playing for Region, had scored in between only minutes the 17th minute.

Meanwhile, Team Bicolandia Bisaya-Iloilo drew a 1-1 stalemate from Federwal and a double from Rinsley Delgado in a convincing 3-0 win over Region 10. Bicolandia-Bisaya-Iloilo drew a 1-1 stalemate from Federwal and a double from Rinsley Delgado in a convincing 3-0 win over Region 10.

Ramil Sanchez opened the scoring in the 2nd minute with a tap-in after capitalizing on a misalignment by the Mindoro defense.

A piercing header by Reydrick Alfeno off an Orcullo free kick from the corner on the 36th minute made it 2-0, before Pauline, Orcullo and Ernest Dean Serrano each made their contributions in the final 10 minutes.

Federwal got his last stab as early as the 17th minute, latching on a through ball from Mohammed Ismail with a left-footed strike from the outside curl, after scoring on a header in the 4th minute and a near repeat in the 24th.

Delgado produced the best goal of the tournament so far, pounding an excellent header with a one-touch volley to the 32nd minute, before doubling the scoring with a ground-ing right-footed strike three minutes from time.

NATIONAL Capital Region's Ali Barrameda removes past an outstretched Region defender at the Ba-ta-tar Marea pitch.

GORDON

DON RICCI DAVID GORDON accepts a bat of cheering from his fellow alumni for the.

The newcomer Red Cross chief turned from Blue to green and urged De La Salle to "be ready to stay in the USAP after the Taft based school ran unmatched phase to withdraw following a controversial scandal.

Gordon is an ardent alumni and staunch supporter of Brother's, La Salle's historic collegiate rival.

"Only those responsible should be punished," said Gordon, who also urged the USAP board to act with prudence on the La Salle case.

The Red Cross chief also continue to with drama from the basketball competitions of the league after it was found that they fielded two ineligible players for two seasons, including the 2004 edition when they won the title.

La Salle had already offered to return the trophy as part of the commitment symbolized by the early gliding of players that Bienvenido and Tim Cone finished.

"It appears that the La Salle's administration knew nothing about the fraud, and has acted responsibly in dealing with it since it was discovered," said Gordon.

"DLSU, return ring with the league," he added. "The school itself is one of the premier educational institutions of the country, one that stands for excellence and love for Christian and humanitarian values."

Gordon said he and the athletes will be hurt the team should La Salle push through with its decision.

BIG DRIVE! Araneta follows

Miñoza heads stellar cast in chase for ₱1.2M purse

FRANCE MIÑOZA COMPLETES the tough road gunning for the ₱1.2 million top prize in The Country Club International which tees off tomorrow at TCC course in Canlubang, Laguna.

Although Miñoza could finish no better than joint 42nd in last week's Hyundai Open, the country's top shotmaker will surely add prestige to the ₱1-million tournament.

"Frankie will surely fire up the rest of the field," said Hans Villarama of the organizing Valenzuela. "We're expecting a shootout in the same four days."

Miñoza will also lead the field in the traditional pro-am event of the tournament put up by Enrique K. Razon Jr. to honor the memory of his father, Don Pacho.

Meanwhile, reigning RP Ladies Open champion Debbie de Villa and national pool members Joyce Tiu, grace and Lois Roberts will also see action in the event as part of their preparations for international tournaments, including the Thailand Ladies Open set early next month.

Despite that sponsoring winchyris Manila Lamigas, where he closed out with a 74 after two 69s, the battle-scarred Miñoza is actually enjoying a resurgence of sort last year after a couple of seasons in the doldrums.

A six-time winner in the rich Japan Tour, the 46-year-old Miñoza found his touch again with three top five finishes on the Asian Tour.

SPORTSWATCH

PBA PARTNERS: PGA Cars Inc., sole distributor of Audi and Porsche in the Philippines, and Philippine Basketball Association in help bring the sport to the next level. PBA director for marketing Jack Ritz, PGA Cars president Miguel Cuenco, PBA commissioner Noli Eala and Protacrat Securities AVP for marketing Anthony Ty sealed the partnership recently.

Knights corner semifinal berth

NCAA CHAMPION LETRAN TRADITIONS ITE league contender from Southern Luzon, San Sebastian College-Recoletos of Cavite, 75-58, yesterday to clinch a semifinal seat in the collegiate division of the National Students Basketball Championships at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

The Knights applied a debilitating full-court press to build a 60-47 spread at the end of the third period and coast to their third straight victory in as many outings.

Jonathan Aldave led all scorers with 16 as Letran managed a meeting with Philippine Christian University, also 3-0, for group A honors in a match that rekindles the NCAA 2005 finals.

LNAP titlist Far Eastern University dumped Manuel L. Quezon University, 80-66, for a third straight win that pinned the Tamaraws for a joining battle against University of Visayas, also 3-0, for group B.

Lelly Jolito Allan Chan led five double figure scorers from FEU with 16 as the Tamaraws bounced for the return of their former star, Arwind Santos, who did not play in their first three games.

FEU snatched into the semis of the tourney sponsored by San Miguel Corp., Petron, three quarter shutout and Mobile basketball, by whipping winless Caridiana College, 105-40.

LNAP juniors champion Ateneo de La Salle-Dasmariñas clinched the No. 2 slot in Group A after thumping Holy Child of Davao, 94-68, for its third win in four games. The DCI Baby Dolphins are unbeaten in three games at the UNC gym.

Jonas Pendrieta.

Viloria is also seeking to go.

"The (Arce) is a great fighter," said Viloria. "Anyone who knows boxing knows that it would be an unbeatable fight. That's the kind of fight I want to be in. It's the kind of fight I have to be in."

Viloria's manager Gary Gielen-ales, however, prefers fighting Mehdi Bouzaiy Organization mini-mumweight champion Ivan Calderon of Puerto Rico first.

One of the options is for Viloria to retain his title in Calderon's hometown.

Calderon sports a 20-0 record. He was nicknamed "Iron Boy" because of his endurance. The 31-year-old won 20 of his fights by unanimous decision.

Flashy Arce ready to rumble with Viloria anywhere

VILORIA: Big money prospects.

THE MIGHTIER MUST TAKE World Boxing Council light flyweight titlist Vicente Viloria has been assigned by against interim WBC/Ly. weight champion Jorge Arce of Mexico may come sooner than expected.

The developed after Arce, who matched Viloria's first title defense against Mexican Jose Antonio Aguilera, defeated wilting Ramos in months with the Filipino knockout anywhere.

"I'll fight Viloria even in his backyard," said Arce, conqueror of 31 games (sixteen Rebellar (twice) and

And both are expected to see action when play shifts to Apo, which will also host sportswrestling and Powerlifting divisions action today and Friday.

Del Monte, the 2004 winner, is given as equal chance like Cantabuang and Northwoods.

Defending champions Jamelah Ann Mirasol, Lenie Dacudao, Ate Pino and Iggy Clavecilla are the promotional members of Del Monte. Wyoung Wee, is also playing supports.

Incidentally, it was determined in the captains' meeting yesterday standing that Cagayan de Oro would be the site of the 60th edition next year. Pacific de Oro and Cagayan de Oro and Del Monte will be the venues.

Major sponsors of the tournament are Asian Asia Airlines, Sunday, 12 Aviation, DMC, Aviation Care, Shoes, NGC 365, Asia 12-1, Pepsi Caribbean International, Philippine Investment, and Gatorade Corp. People Asia, Premier Water and Spirits, Study Project, Adidas and Amazon and Entertainment Corp. Add, DPS Distributors, Fellow Tobacco and Radio Mindanao Network are the secured sponsors with 98.3 Hitmen, Star Brewery, Century Tuna Foods, Vienna Manufacturers, Ali City Center and Holiday Plaza Hotel as sponsors.

BARE EYES

Rucah Fernández

RUCAH Fernández on leave. She continues, Bare Eye, will be back on March 22.

Derick sends Phone Pals to 'Hell Week'

IN HUDDLE

Keith Cellis

MIKE APOSTOL of The Inquirer said Tak Ta Tan head coach Jerick Fonacier called his Tit o Day with the Phone Pals 'Hell Week'.

Phone pals Ato Tandoan and Jimmy Alapag refused Derick's words.

"It's been a little rough, but we're recovering," said Ato, who announced that the team is now on its second week of hell. Apostol is thorough, that the new coach's backbreaking training program will yield positive results.

Derick took the Phone Pals to Subic last Monday for a road camp.

The objective, he said, is twofold. "The right to training and team bonding."

It's the first week was hard, he said the second one is double as hard.

It was harsh, harsh, week the moment the team arrived in Subic. There boxers of basketball practice from 6 a.m. to 12 noon, followed by lunch and a short rest. Weights in the afternoon and/or again training. This, in summary, is what the Phone Pals have to contend with daily in the four-day camp.

Derick, who can actually feel the seasoned energy, is happy with the way the Phone Pals have been responding to the new program.

"The team is working very, very hard," Derick said. "I've been pushing them to the limits but they were able to endure. They're showing they want to turn things around. I told them I cannot do this alone, and the can management. We all have to work together."

So far, no one is complaining.

"Everyone is taking the training positively," said Jimmy Alapag. "Everyone is cooperating. We know this is the only way to improve."

For the second conference, Derick said he will be putting a premium on defense.

"Offense is not a problem to this team," Derick explained. "Many scorer type offense, until I get on board, I believe defense my emphasis as well."

If the team shows the same enthusiasm, determination and discipline as it did in training camp, Derick said there's no reason why the training would not yield positive results.

How long has it been since BAP president Jun Lim and the country's basketball stakeholders got together to chart a new course for Philippine basketball? Two months? Three months?

I can't remember exactly, but yesterday I realized that it had been all too quiet on this front. I decided to find out how far the group has gone in reconstructing the sports association.

My finding was perfect. PBA Commissioner Noli Eala said the first draft of the BAP's new constitution and bylaws was scheduled for distribution to the stakeholders yesterday for study.

"The document's will contain the objectives, principles, structures and programs of the "new" BAP, which will not be divulged to the public until the whole process is completed."

If there are proposed amendments, Noli said these would be discussed when the board meets on Tuesday, Feb. 28.

Noli said the group has already met four times and has covered a lot of ground.

"There are three-hour meetings, that's why my accomplish so much," he said.

Following next Tuesday's meeting, the group will immediately work on a revised draft for the new BAP constitution and bylaws.

Once finalized, the documents will be presented to the Philippine Olympic Committee. Upon approval, the papers will be submitted to the Fiba.

The new BAP's constitution is patterned after Basketball USA, according to Noli.

To avoid derailment, the summary of the constitution and bylaws will be kept strictly confidential until such time that it is approved by the POC and the Fiba. So far the group is lucky there have been no leaks.

Noli said he expects to get the documents finalized by the 4th of March.

It's not on the agenda, but with so much agitation over the recall of the late Best Player of the Conference race, Noli said he expects the matter to be ushered in at the board meeting set for Monday, Feb. 27.

TEAM USA

Shaq-Kobe reunion looms

HOUSTON, TEXAS—KOBE BRYANT AND SHAQ O'Neal, who have shaken hands after a public falling out when they were teammates with the Los Angeles Lakers, may become teammates again at the Fiba World Championship.

Bryant has already volunteered for national team duty in Japan this summer, but his former Lakers teammate, O'Neal, now with the Miami Heat, is still thinking over on his bidon.

The two were the backbone of the Lakers when they won three NBA championships.

Jerry Colangelo, the managing director of USA Basketball's men's senior national team program, was at the NBA all-Star weekend in Houston, and according to a report in the Arizona Republic, he has 20 commitments for 22 spots available pending one decision from O'Neal.

"Shaq saw me in the elevator and said, 'I'll call you in a week or two,'" Colangelo said. "I said, 'Shaq, there's always a spot for you.'"

The report also said the only non-NBA player Colangelo has a chance of convincing to Japan are 12 Bullet, of Duke University, Gonzaga College's Adam Morrison and Ohio State University-bound high school star Greg Oden.

The draw for the Fiba World Championship was held in Tokyo, Japan. The Americans are in Group B with Puerto Rico and Iran, which needed wild cards, and China, Senegal and Slovenia.

The United States, booted out of the 2002 Fiba World Championship in Indianapolis at the quarterfinals and two years later lost three times to the Olympics before settling for bronze.

Last year, a team which consisted largely of teammates, predominantly from leagues outside Bryant's (NBA) fourth at the FIBA Americas Championship and qualified for the Fiba World Championship.

Bryant and O'Neal helped the LA Lakers to three NBA titles. AFP

Austrian men finally get gold in Winter Olympics

TEAM Canada celebrates after the final buzzer. The Canadians whipped Sweden to once again dominate women's hockey in the Games.

TURIN, ITALY—BENJAMIN RAICH finally gave Austria its Olympic gold medal in men's Alpine skiing at this year's Winter Games.

Almost an hour later, Austrian teammate Rhilenda Dreibrunner won her second.

Later Monday, under flights in the Italian alps, the Austrian men's ski jumping team made it three gold for the day and seven overall—a national record.

The victories provided redemption in for a number of Austrian Olympians been overshadowed by a doping scandal stalking around its Nordic team.

Juliana Marks and Roman Rosenauer continued Austria's dominance of the Turin Alpine skating rink, taking the ice dancing title—a slight that bridged the Soviet together Duo Anjelica's 1988 effort in the original Games.

American pair Tanith Belbin and Benjamin Agosto were second and Belgian Gwendoline and Nathan Gauthier of Ukraine took the bronze.

Canada's surprise completed a domineering ice hockey campaign, beating shock Brazilian Sweden, 4-3, in the final.

Raich, the overall World Cup leader, won the men's giant slalom Monday with a two-run combined time of 2 minutes, 38.08 seconds to give the much-hyped Austrian men's team a gold medal in the men's Giant Slalom event.

Germany Maric, who won the giant slalom at his last Olympics in 1998 at the Nagano Games, took bronze, finishing .26 behind his teammate. And Conrad of France got silver .07 seconds slower than Raich.

Raich, who won the last two World Cup giant slalom races before the games, was 38th after his opening by but won the gold with excellent second effort.

"This makes me extremely happy," Raich said. "The Olympic victory was my greatest goal."

Dreibrunner, who also won the opening downhill last week, secured the title for 1:33.47, edging Janica Kostelic by .27 seconds. Alexandra Meissnitzer of Austria was third.

"Nothing like an angel," Dreibrunner said.

Reiteler reaches fourth Olympic gold medal Saturday in the women's two-hour ski-run—both in the super-G—to become the most decorated woman in Olympic Alpine skiing history. AP

Campo bats for revival of RP chess

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FOR THE PAST 20 YEARS, FLORENCIO CAMPOMANES had seen the roller-coaster ride of Philippine chess. As he let TV today, he wants the sport closest to his heart to spring back to life.

"RP chess should straighten up, if it wishes to be counted again as a brilliant Asian, let alone Asian chess power," said Campomanes, the World Chess Federation (FIDE) president from 1982-1995 and one of the foremost boosters of the game.

"We are now in the throes of the hangs," said Campomanes, captain of the first RP team that saw action in the World Chess Olympiad in Moscow, ruling the British Avenging of the Filipino chessers in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games where they won that out of the gold in the competitions dominated by Vietnam.

"We used to look up to countries like China, Vietnam and India," added Campomanes at yesterday's Pitt Inns at the Pavilion restaurant in Manila.

"Even they have surpassed us."

The progress's statement, Campomanes pointed out that "our serious initiating [of the national event] not undertaken despite a generous grant of P5 million from the Pitt Development Foundation."

Appointed as chairman of the jury of appeals in the World Olympiad set in Turin, Italy in May, Campomanes traced the country's chess decline to lack of grassroots development. The prevailing "chess culture" among top players and the parents of sending of the veterans to big local tournaments.

Campomanes cited as an example Asia's first Grandmaster Eugene Torre "who continues to ignite our being unaided in tournaments. He has done his stories for the country and must give way to others will also have a chance."

Also set by Campomanes' track is National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Dr. Tong Ichi.

"He (Co) can't run chess the way his man (Garcia) and Bell," said Campomanes. "Ridiculous stopping these players to have players' contact and some pit-stuff."

CAMPOMANES

Big City youth games start April 2

WITH SIX EVENTS SCHEDULED THIS PAST-reopening until a host for dorms, the fifth Manila Youth Games is all set for its April 2 to 9 bowling at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

The overall competition will see 10,000 of the best young athletes from all over the Big City join the 14 sports competitions that will be held.

This year's theme is "Blood, Athletes, Sweat Hits!"

Arnold "Ali" Arteza, chief of the organizing Manila Sports Council (Msc), said yesterday all 897 barangays and 128 public and private schools in the country's capital will be represented in the week-long multi-event competition.

"We envision the 5th MP Games to be bigger and more competitive than the fourth edition," said the son of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

Events to be featured are athletics, badminton, baseball, chess, dancesports, football, gymnastics, softball, swimming, table tennis, lawn tennis, taekwondo, volleyball and track and field.

Meanwhile, Atienza revealed that about 30,000 assorted canned goods donated by participants in last year's Int. Manila Marathon will be turned over to barangay centers in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte.

Proceeds of the marathon had received registration fees in exchange for donation of canned goods to Southern Leyte's food drive for the benefit, initially, of cash-fed children in Antique and Bohol.

Anticipating a huge turnout for the MY Games, organizers invited accepting entries as early as January. AP

Sorenstam tops LPGA world ranking; Rosales 24th

CARLSBAD, CALIFORNIA—ANNIKA SORENstam was officially designated as the best female golfer Tuesday, topping the debut of Women's World Golf Ranking based on her 21 victories worldwide and three major championships over the last two years.

The Swede led Ne. 2 Paula Creamer by nearly twice the American's point total, while Michelle Wie was third.

The 16-year-old from Hawaii, who turned pro in October, could move ahead of Creamer depending on what happens in the Dubai Open in Thailand this weekend for the LPGA Tour.

Jennifer Rosales of the Philippines, who had a big year but ended 24th.

The women's ranking, sponsored by Rolex, will be published every Tuesday and used to determine the starting fields in tournaments on the LPGA Tour, including the Women's British Open and the HSBC Women's World Match Play.

"The Rolex Rankings make unbiasedly true comparisons and sometime or professional stars virtually invisible, providing a definitive answer to the question, 'Who are the best women golfers in the world?'" Ivan Khaikin, LPGA Tour commissioner Carolyn Bivens said.

The system is similar to the men's ranking. It measures performance over two years, with emphasis placed on the most recent 13-week period. Points are assigned based on the strength of field, then divided by the number of tournament played.

But there are two major differences.

Professionals and amateurs can appear in the women's world ranking, while anyone can earn points by competing in official events on the US, European, Japan, Korean and Australian women's tours, along with the developmental Futures Tour in the United States.

And while the men have a minimum criteria of 40 tournament over two years, the women's criteria is only 15.

That explains why Wie, who plans sparingly while attending school in Honolulu, ranked not ranked so high.

She has played 21 events on the US Tour since 2004 with six top-10 finishes—three in majors.

ROSALES AP

"Nice tattoo!

Man, that must have stung.

Looks like it took the whole day too.

Now pan your phone to the left...

I swear, this video calling is phat.

Just look at how clean those lines are.

Zoom in. I want to see more detail.

Oh yeah. That is one sweet tat.

Ok babe, now zoom out all the way!

I want to see where else you got inked.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Lito Zulueta & Yolanda

JAKE GYLLENHAAL ANG LEE

Bafta's best

LONDON—"BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN" TOOK FOUR AWARDS including Best Picture at London's British Academy Film Awards, boosting its hopes for the Oscars on March 5.

Ang Lee was named Best Director and Jake Gyllenhaal won Best Supporting Actor. Lucy Holtbill'ey and Emma Thomas, who adapted Annie Proulx's short story, won the Best Adapted Screenplay.

The film beat a strong shortlist that included "Capote," "Crash," "Good Night, and Good Luck" and British favorite "The Constant Gardener." AP

Warring industry leaders meet

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

WARRING INDUSTRY LEADERS CAME FACE to face on Monday in dispute with President Macapagal-Arroyo over the ills and controversies plaguing local movies—VAT for theaters, amusement rates, piracy and the redistribution of the Metro Manila Film Festival proceeds.

The rare hour meeting in Malacañang was "very fruitful," said Bro Gaudiquez, vice chair of the Motion Picture Anti-Film Piracy Council Inc. and president of the National Cinema Association of the Philippines, with Mr Arroyo presiding over the...

MORE STORIES A2-3

Love revisited

Andy Williams takes back Pinoy fans to days of wine and roses

REVIEW

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

Andy Williams lifted the Big Dome on December's Joy with every special things, indeed—and girl songs and wild imaginings, not the least of which was love all over again as the many splendored thing it was and always will be.

That's over 30 songs, including a medley of three of his most endearing hits, the theme from blockbuster movies "Love Story" and "The Godfather" topped with "Can't Help Falling In Love With You" from "Blue Hawaii." The ineffable Mr. Williams breezed through the challenging repertoire, swaying over so gently in some numbers, like "One Less Bell to Ring," and really giving the floor the old hard, and-true in others, like James Taylor's "Fire Inside My Life."

Singing along at times the whole time, a group just of the audience might as well have sprung a collective thought balloon: "We're 30 (and over) and proud of it!" Yes, it was a perfect evening for reminiscing on old-fashioned lyrics, sweeping melodies and honest voices and emotions.

Every single number was perhaps not the way his audience remembered it in "The Andy Williams Show" of the 1960s—sweet, sincere and, best of all, unhurried. Like the voice of the man in the world. This wasn't lost on the appreciative crowd. After all, it was a date concert.

One of the evening's best revelations was "God Only Knows," a Beach Boys original. "I don't sing it like they do," the singer quipped, and the audience cracked up as they did with his every joke.

Williams also took on Smokey Robinson, Barry Manilow (the Bee Gees, too) his late dear friend, John Denver.

But the show stopper that each ended in a standing ovation for the way maestro was packed—were sentimental favorites "Moon River," "Impossible Dream," "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" and...all together now—"Moon River!"

When Williams said goodbye, the blissed-out crowd wouldn't let go. But he was driver for [illegible] two songs early and sang them "so-o-o-o-o" remaining on the stopwatch guide [illegible], we got a reply] as reasons—fittingly, "My Funny Valentine" and his forever "Days of wine and roses" [illegible] and goodbye piece, "May Each Day."

From the blushes came an impassioned plea, "Don't leave!"

Well, we didn't have that you, but the singer made sure we got it some other way: "Soon I'll kiss you bi-bi-bi..."

Until he back again? YOU, Mr. Williams? Doreen G. Kilarde

OPENING TODAY

excellently fascinating."

Mga Batang Lansangan

Main Camille Pilotz, Juan Rodrigo, Melissa Morales

Directed by Angelito de Guzman

A remake of a 1976 [illegible] starring Vilma Santos and [illegible] by Angelito de Guzman, whose son takes over the director's chair. Angelito promises "a new color" to this familiar tale of street children.

Memoirs of a Geisha

Stars Ziyi Zhang, Michelle Yeoh, Gong Li, Kou Watanabe

OPENING #3-3

Syriana

Stars George Clooney, Matt Damon, Chris Cooper, William Hurt

Directed by Stephen Gaghan

A political thriller set in the world of the oil industry. Never [illegible] of the Chicago Sun-Times wrote: "...

airborne access

BAYAN TEL

Opening Today

From page A2 1

Directed by Rob Marshall
A visit to the enigmatic world of geishas....Japanese women "natural in poise, flutter and pout too," said Steward of the New York Daily News

thinks the female leads "put on an Oscar-worthy catfight."

Mukesh Bhatt's Murder

Stars Mallika Sherawat, Emraan Hashmi, Ashutosh Rana
Directed by Anurag Basu
From Bollywood, a supposed re-

OPENING ACT

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MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Warring industry leaders meet

Fromage A2-1

In a phone interview with Inquirer Entertainment, Cayanigan reported, "The President told the Jurors to, revised the law that created the Film Academy of the Philippines and MMFF. She asked Jury advisor for political affairs Gabby Claudio to give her all relevant information immediately."

Claudio would be the group "point man," according to Ms Arroyo.

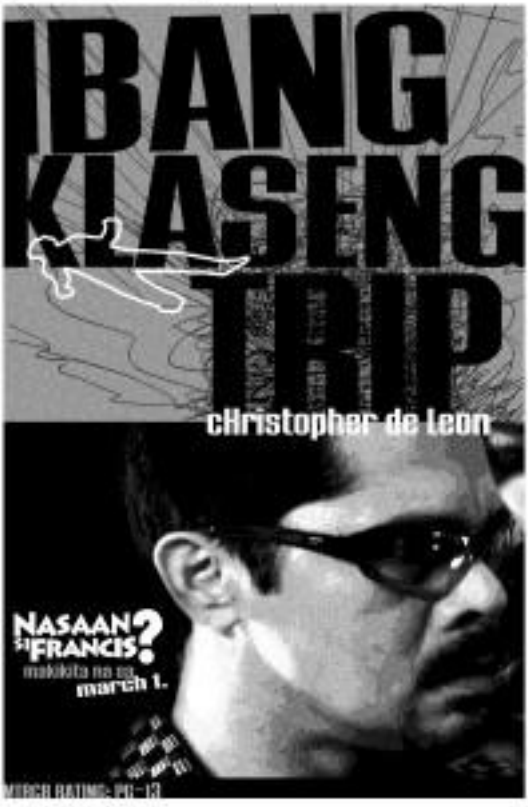
Present were the three participants in the lenient-supervised over the MMFF heads: Lee Martinez, FAP director general; Vicente del Rosario, presidential consultant for the entertainment industry; and Edu Manzano, Department of Media Board dean.

Tension eased

dent present were Lee, Manzano, Revilla Jr. and brother Mar, Jon Revilla. Regal producer Lily Monteverde, Bonnie Ong of the Anti-Film Piracy Council, and Cayanigan.

"This meeting] must 'will be the FAP Member said.

Cayanigan said he felt the "free-wheeling dialogue" and is the President voted the heaven in the interview."



Opening Today

maker of Adrian Lyne's "Unfaithful," starring Richard Gere and Diane Lane. IndiaflM News Bureau elsewhere. "Hollywood is going through a revolution ... [with] different themes [and] established body clusters."

Final Destination 3

Stars Ryan Merriman, Mary Elizabeth Winstead, Glee Roldan

Directed by James Wong

The third of the franchise on lessons learned by the Grim Reaper. Michael Wilmington of the Chicago Tribune said it "should either dilute your pride appetites or drive you to the exits."

Big Momma's House 2

Stars Martin Lawrence, Nia Long, Anthony Anderson, Emily Procter

Directed by John Whitesell

Martin Lawrence is back to [illegible] FBI man Malcolm Turner, Kyle lands of the New York Post [illegible] expectations" to [illegible] amusing.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Gov't caps bids for 20-year bonds B13

BUSINESS

Editor Raul D. Pangalangan
Associate Editor Connie S. Mariano

PC BUYER'S GUIDE
The No.1 Computer Magazine in the Philippines

Peso slips past 52 to a dollar

DELIA PAZ

ROMUALDEZ

SSS chief named chair of EPCIB

By Doris C. Dumlao

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM president Corazon Dela Paz was yesterday elected chair of Equitable PCIBank on the recommendation of the SM group and the state-owned pension fund that she heads.

Dela Paz replaced Reidenaldo Bautista Romualdez, who was named vice chair along with Soledad Ty and Phoenix Garcia, president of the Government Service Insurance System. The EPCIB board also elected a new member, Raymond Tan, ex-partner resigned SB1 nominee Ricardo Pedilla. (See Candidates, page B2.)

The SM group has the single biggest block in EPCIB at 34 percent, followed by the SSS with a 20-percent stake. The Romualdez family owns about 8 percent of EPCIB while the GSIS controls 12.4 percent.

Romualdez confirmed Dela Paz's election, but when asked why this happened, he said: "You have to ask Cora (Dela Paz) and Tessie (Ty)." "It came as a surprise, it wasn't even on the agenda. But I hope Dela Paz will protect the interest of the members of the SSS," he added.

Ty belatedly denied BusinessWorld quit the post to sit as the SM group's chief representative in the EPCIB board.

Bautista-led Allied Affiliates Corporation is opposing a merger offer from the SM group's three-node Dee Universal Bank.

BDO had proposed to swap up to 1.6 of its shares for every EPCIB share. At a second option offered by BDO, the swap ratio could also be based on the book values of both banks to be assessed by an independent accounting firm using International Accounting Standards.

The offer period ran for the thirty-some days it expired last Dec. 31 but BDO has not given up to be bid to merge with EPCIB.

Even then it was among EPCIB shareholders is needed to effect any merger.

The election of a new chair in EPCIB did not mean that the SM group had won the BDO up- (BDO, B2)

On coup rumors, interest rate hike prospects

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO SLID TO THE 52-$1 LEVEL YESTERDAY ON FRESH political jitters triggered by Monday's blast in Malacañang as well as escalating coup rumors ahead of the 20th People Power anniversary.

But the local currency pulled back to the $1.51 territory following market talk that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas sold dollars at the spot foreign exchange market to cushion the peso's fall.

The peso opened at 52.00 in trades found profit-taking opportunities but bounced back to 51.815 before closing at 51.85 against the US dollar or even stronger than Monday's finish of 51.9950. Total volume traded was $605 million.

"We believe the BSP was selling dollars to thwart peso weakness," said BA Risk analyst Tim Condon in a commentary yesterday.

"Investors are conditioned to see politics-induced pricing weakness as a buying opportunity until one loses count in that the trend will prove no different. Still, this is shaping up as an exciting week," Condon said.

He noted the Philippine police was still on red alert after the Malacañang explosion.

"Political noise has gone up ahead of the 20th anniversary of People Power I on Feb. 25," Condon noted.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr., however, insisted the foreign exchange rate is sustained market-driven. "There is good turnover flow in the forex market and there is no need for intervention."

"The peso weakness can be affected by local developments. The improvement in the domestic currency today arose from portfolio inflows and OFW remittances. Dollar sellers/remitters while corporate demand was also at fairly level," the BSP chief explained.

RCBC economist Emma Pante said the dollar will continue to appreciate in the peso due to the Malacañang explosion as well as expectations that the US Federal Reserve would further raise interest rates in June.

"Commercial demand is seen to come in (Peso, B2)

Stocks down on coup concerns

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.16 percent lower in PHISIX on Tuesday, as investors stayed out of the weekend on fresh security concerns after arrest of the presidential aides, Reuters said.

Gains in PLDT ended the session with The composite index fell 7.26 points to 2,819.81 after trading between 2,811.43 and 2,834.33. Turnover was 878 million shares worth P678 million.

Losers outnumbered gainers 57 to 28, with 54 stocks unchanged.

Concerns said that other issues of institutional

PRIVATE SECTOR FUND SUPPORT

New BOT agency pushed

By Michelle V Rone

THE GOVERNMENT'S FINANCING RESOURCES TO REVIVE its build-operate-transfer (BOT) initiatives, including the creation of a so-called BOT Authority to boost private-sector investments in public infrastructure.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda told reporters he was pushing for the amendments of the BOT Law to increase not the incentives of more BOT projects as a way to jump-start the economy while he grew tumor was of long-standing official deficit.

House Bill No. 5002, which Salceda co-authored, seeks the creation of the BOT Authority. The proposed government agency will be tasked with coordinating all BOT-related undertakings to be undertaken by the government.

Under the bill, all government agencies, state-owned firms and local government units will be made to submit lists of proposed BOT projects to the BOT Authority for coordination afterward.

"In the present Philippine economic environment, the reality is that the only feasible way for most infrastructure to be built is through BOT," Salceda said in the bill's (NEW, B2)

Fitch upgrade boosts PLDT, Globe

Telcos' market values surge on improved ratings

By Dixie L. Lucas

THE VALUES OF THE TWO largest telecommunication firms in the country received a boost Tuesday after an influential debt watcher raised their outlooks on the back of improving sentiment toward the Philippine economy.

In a statement, Fitch Ratings said it had revised the outlook on the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.'s (PLDT) long-term currency rating from "negative" to "stable."

Fitch also raised the outlook for PLDT's main rival, Ayala-owned Globe Telecom Inc. from "negative" to "stable."

The upgrades signaled developed over the ratio for both firms and will translate to cheaper borrowing costs when the firms raise funds from foreign creditors. The "stable" outlooks for both firms aim to make their existing foreign currency-denominated bonds more valuable in the secondary market.

Last week, Fitch also raised the outlook on the foreign currency debt of the national government from "negative" to "stable," following the progress made in securing key fiscal reform measures like the two-stage implementation of the Enhanced Value-Added Tax Law last Feb. 1.

Fitch's upgrade boosted PLDT's value on the stock exchange by P30 to P1,750 per share during yesterday's trading. Globe's share price also rose by P1 apiece to P820.

Shares of PLDT and Globe subsequently were the first and the fourth most active traded stocks on the bourse yesterday.

Fitch said it had affirmed PLDT's long-term foreign currency rating for global bonds and senior notes at BB, and its senior, the preferred stock at B+.

PLDT's long-term local currency rating has also been affirmed at BB+ with a stable outlook.

"PLDT's foreign currency and senior debt instrument ratings are constrained by the sovereign foreign currency rating," Fitch said, explaining the company's relatively low credit rating. "On the other hand, PLDT's long-term local currency rating is not constrained."

Fitch also affirmed Globe's long-term foreign currency rating and senior notes at BB-, and its long-term local currency rating at BB+ with a stable outlook.

According to the Fitch website, PLDT has $1.6 billion worth of senior unsecured notes held by foreign creditors, and another $21 million worth of preferred stock held by foreign investors.

Globe, on the other hand, has $499.7 million worth of senior unsecured notes owed to foreign creditors, Fitch said.

JG Summit raises ₱1.5B in fresh offer

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE JG SUMMIT GROUP OF John Gokongwei Jr.-owned a total of P1.5 billion in fresh funds from the sale of additional shares in its snacks and beverage subsidiary Universal Robina Corp. (URC).

Also, Swiss Skyrgin Islands investment firm Astonia Investment Ltd. raised P525 million from the sale of an additional 7.36 million shares in URC, industry sources said.

Both shareholders generated roughly P1.6 billion in proceeds.

In its disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange Monday, the JG Summit Group said it sold 87.65 million shares in URC—worth P1.5 billion...one of the total 95.2 million primary-offer option.

JG Summit is composed of flagship firm JG Summit Holdings, Inc., Universal Robina Inc., and Robinsons Supermarket Corp.

The balance of 7.56 million shares, or P125 million, belongs to British Virgin Islands investment fund Astonia Asian Fund Ltd., sources said.

URC and major shareholders last week raised P18.8 billion from the sale of 603 million shares at P27 apiece. URC's underwriter is UBS Investment Bank.

Including the over-allotment option, the total offer consisted of 770 million shares worth P32.4 billion.

URC shares rose 1.4 percent to P27.75 yesterday from P27.30.

Microsoft, Intel, PLDT extend aid to SMEs

By Rainnel W. Domingo

INTEL, MICROELECTRONICS Philippines has teed up with the Department of Trade and Industry and two other major private firms to set up a technology shop that would allow small businesses to try out software and hardware brands before actually buying the products.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila yesterday said that the project, which also involves the Commission on Information and Communication Technology, would see tech-digital platform technology like Microsoft Philippines' software, and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.'s infrastructure to create the Business Technology Center.

Favila said that the center would enable entrepreneurs to gain an edge in business and technology, thereby boosting productivity.

Located in the DTI Regional Operations Group Office in the Makati business district, the center will give SMEs the opportunity to try out the latest Intel Pentium D processor desktops, and Intel Centrino mobile technology notebooks, Favila said.

The trade chief added that small businesses owners may consult with DTI experts to lead them to overcome their operations.

Also, the center will serve as a training venue for technology skills-building seminars for SMEs, which will teach them how to use PCs for their businesses.

The training modules aim to enable the use of the Internet as a tool to create online presence and transaction methods, as well as lessons on online security and the protection of business systems.

"There are 955,000 SMEs nationwide (comprising) 90 percent of all businesses in the country," Favila said. "They are crucial to the growth of the country, with a thriving in 69 percent of all employment and 33 percent of the country's output."

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Stocks down ...

the Palace, investors were additionally nervous given the upcoming 20th anniversary of the popular revolt that ended the 20-year rule of the late Ferdinand Marcos.

While some see the resulting losses as a buying opportunity, many failed to be reassured, with investors opting to stay on the sidelines.

An explosion rocked the Mindanao provincial palace grounds on Monday amid reports of failed coup attempt against President Macapagal-Arroyo, who survived a military mutiny in 2003.

There were no casualties or damage and the government has said it had quelled the blast.

Early yesterday, government forces arrested one of five junior officers who escaped from military prison last month while on trial for the 2003 mutiny. AFP

Tessie strikes back

Cocktales

Victor C. Agnawin

Old Heritage Terrazas of Provencio Style

Bar who was in control of Equitable PCIBank

In a boardroom coup, by ally Cayetano dela Paz runs yesterday elected bank chair, replacing ousted Presidential Master Romualdez.

Romualdez, who had blocked the merger plan between Ty's Banco de Oro along with GSIS president Winston Garcia, was ousted elected vice-chair, along with Garcia and Sy.

According to the grapevine, Javier Ed named Tan is just awaiting Bangko Sentral clearance to replace Romualdez Florentino Floirendo, an erstwhile ally on the board.

The boardroom coup was a swift response to Friday's unexpected presentation by Pendlin, urging the bank's executive committee to go along with the GSIS plan to oversee the retirement of the 20 percent treasury shares and instead auction the block along with that of the GSIS' 12.5 percent stake.

The powerful executive committee, however, immediately shot down Pendlin's proposal, saying it was not in the best interest of the bank and its shareholders.

Benjamin Philip Romualdez had earned a reputation for his attempt to stop the boardroom changes and prevent his brother from being removed.

As the smoke cleared, the election of Dela Paz, the bank's security features president, removed any lingering doubt as to the alliance of the previous board's 20 percent with the Sy's 39 percent stake in the bank.

The next scenario that could happen soon is, should Dela Paz be finally replaced as GSIS chief by GSIS president Winston Garcia, who is Black and White and anti-GMA mass action, has vacated as treasurer secretary of a Davis Municipal to open a window in lowering bully problem.

Instead of expulsion—like what to brothers have been doing, wagging their fingers at Malacañang—the exclusive school will allow the misbehaving bully to finish the school year, just as what the parents of the bully's victim had feared.

The school's decision was relayed to the victim's parents and lawyer after La Salle Greenhills president Brother Bernard Oca, instead of offering the worried parents a shoulder to cry on, defended his decision to protect the school from any potential legal entanglements.

"Since a grievance is brought to the attention of the school authorities using legal means, then it follows that the school's legal counsel is called upon to respond accordingly," senior grade school principal Evangeline Tamayo, invoking the spirit of St. La Salle [Because of space constraints, Cocktales has passed on the La Salle letter to the Letters to the Editor section.]

Tamayo said the only lessons owners of the bully problem in January, not in November as was alleged in Cocktales, after the male assistant principal reached his two-month investigation on the problematic 13-year-old scout.

Worse, the assistant principal denied having been handcuffed and subsequently losing a hamburger apology from the bully, which the victim's parents claim the assistant principal had borrowed from them in the course of his investigation.

"The incident in question had been investigated and a decision was rendered following the school's standard procedure for handling disciplinary cases by a discipline board and chaired by the assistant principal," Tamayo wrote.

In other words, despite the assertion of a conviction board, the earlier decision made by the assistant principal, which is to transfer the bully to a middle section and allow the bully to finish the term, stays. Oh, about the son of the victim's lawyer whom we reported the other day as also having been summoned to the principal's office, apparently the school found a solution to the student's malice.

Given their swift reaction, the La Salle brothers apparently find the rubber-stamp measures to morality and community values than bullying, cheat lessons, absences stealing, physical violence, come up and, a growing epidemic, speaking in behind tongues.

Money-go-round

■ SEC Chair Fe Barin has cut through the legal stumbling blocks being invoked by the Mike Arroyo colleagues and pounded on the publicly listed and cash-rich Philcomsat Holdings Corp. to hold a much-delayed shareholders' meeting next month.

■ WOULD-BE entrepreneurs who want tips on how to start a business should visit the Go Negosyo Expo, organized by GMA adviser Joey Concepcion III, at the Makati Makati this Friday and Saturday.

Heard through the grapevine

SPURRED by the loan denials by Korean assessors amid soaring gas prices, Toyota has

COCKTALES B4

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Rules on power distribution services, open access OKd

By Abigail L. Ho

THE ENERGY REGULATORY Commission has issued the rules that will govern regulated electricity distribution services and open access.

The Distribution Services and Open Access Rules (DSOAR) sets the guidelines for the provision of services to both captive and contestable markets.

Once open access is implemented, the markets will be divided into captive and contestable categories. The first is composed of power users that have no choice of power suppliers, while the second is made up of users that can choose their electricity suppliers.

The DSOAR covers all distribution utilities, including those operating in renewable zones.

Under the DSOAR, distribution utilities should be ready to provide a variety of services in the captive and contestable markets "in a reliable, efficient and economical manner."

For the contestable markets, distribution utilities have to provide unbundled distribution wheeling services to retail electricity suppliers, the supplier of last resort, other distribution utilities, generators, and distribution, connection, assets and services (DCAS) to end-users.

For the captive market, the DSOAR requires distribution utilities to provide similar services as in the current market. Apart from those services, distribution utilities are required to make available, upon reasonable request, "all regulated services at rates, terms and conditions that are just and reasonable to all customers."

The guidelines set the minimum for the suppliers of last resort, or a regulated entity that has to serve end-users in the contestable market.

It also provides the procedure in establishing regulated service rates for distribution utilities pursuant to the cluster business wheeling rate guidelines. The rules will also cover areas DSWRG (distribution wheeling rates guidelines) issues.

Taiwan firms plan to invest in Subic

By Roland W. Dondoyo

THREE MORE Taiwanese businessmen are looking at the possibility of putting up projects at the Subic Seaport to expand their Southeast Asian operations, according to the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

SBMA Administrator Armand C. Arreza said the firms' representatives visited Subic last month to look for suitable locations for their projects.

Earlier, 14 Taiwanese companies committed to invest $5 billion in new projects in the zone. This commitment was made when Taiwan Economic Minister Ho Mei-Yueh came to the country late last year to attend a joint economic forum.

Arreza said the new batch of prospective Taiwanese investors were Stanz Bicycle Corp., Overseas Chinese Trade Guarantee Fund and the Mitac Inc. Group.

"The rests of new companies have a clear indication of the continued confidence of the Taiwanese business community to invest in the Philippines," he said.

Arreza, a leading bike manufacturer in Asia, plans to put up a plant at the 23-hectare lot at the Taiwanese Industrial Park.

The Kuo Kuo group wants to produce shoe laces for venture for export to Taiwan, market, while Overseas Chinese Credit Guarantee Fund would offer financial credit to Taiwanese firms and other investors in Subic.

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Republic of the Philippines
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₱1-B indemnity fund for poultry raisers proposed

Gov't taking avian flu virus threat seriously

By Christine A. Gaylican

PREPARING FOR THE WORST that may arise from the continuing avian flu scare threat, the Department of Agriculture is seeking at least ₱1 billion in budget for an indemnity fund for affected poultry raisers.

The agriculture department and the local commercial poultry raisers claimed it necessary to put up an indemnity fund to encourage backyard raisers whose stocks were affected by the virus to come out in the open. This will help prevent the spread of the virus.

The indemnity fund will be used to compensate the poultry raisers in case a mass culling of their stocks would be required.

Backyard raisers represent 30 percent of the country's poultry industry with the big agribusiness companies accounting for the 70 percent.

Local raisers had proposed cash compensation equivalent to 100 percent of prevailing commercial rates of the stocks or production cost based on age of the affected broilers or layers.

Agriculture Secretary Domingo F. Panganiban said the agency was having difficulty in securing the budget as the finance and the Congress were not willing to commit to set aside funds for this purpose.

"We could not vow a guarantee that the indemnity fund will not be given to abuse," said Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. in a briefing.

Donor agencies including the United States Agency for International Development and the Japan International Cooperation Agency are offering financial assistance.

The National Avian Influenza Task Force (NAFF) proposed a tax credit type of compensation for commercial poultry raisers that might be affected.

ITES investments in regions growing

By Roland W. Domingo

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY-enabled service companies have so far invested ₱9.06 billion in seven outside Metro Manila.

Rudy Ondoy-Orbeta, Cainta Cmte said Business-IT&E Issues must counting for possible locations in at least 27 provinces and cities outside the capital where they could expand their operations.

Orbeta, who is in charge of the Department of Trade and Industry's regional operations group, said data regarding the flow of investments and spread of business process outsourcing ventures and call centers into the regions still needed to be verified.

Commissioner Tirso Mejia of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT) said investors had to be informed about the readiness of regional areas similar to Intel ITEZ operations.

"These (areas) sit on a $10-billion fiber optic network that can serve as backbone for global connectivity," Mejia said. "These necessary infrastructure facilities—including the submarine cables and the satellite installations—that would allow these cities to be connected with the rest of the world."

He was referring to the cities of Batangas, Dumaguete, Legazpi, Laguna de Bay, Bacolod, Cebu, Iligan, Iloilo, Davao and Dumaguete. He also identified the provinces of Leyte, Bohol, Samar, Pampanga, Bataan, Pangasinan, Camarines Sur and the Southern Tagalog region to belong to the areas that were considered Intel ITEZ operations.

Local governments have been actively pitching for the development of their areas as IT hubs. In Leyte, for example, the provincial board has been promoting its "Six-30 words from a compact of skilled and trainable people, lower wage rates and available telecommunications infrastructure."

According to the DTI, Leyte "houses of readily available office space, adequate six sen and land transportation services and facilities that made the Visayan province a logger-friendly."

DTI also further showed that in school year 2004-2005, graduates of nearly 46 colleges and universities comprise about half of the region's 14,000 graduates, and about 27 percent of the region's 97,000 students at the tertiary level.

Also, the province built the Leyte Information Technology Resources Park, which can accommodate ITES firms like call centers given its adequate power and water supply, and available telephone and Internet systems.

From page B1

Peso slips . . .

wealth's end, with coup talk heating up further dollar buying," Pabon said.

Based on the technical chart,

From page B1

Bitan said the peso-dollar rate was showing a correction-oriented, choppy phase bounded by 52.25 and 52.75 to $1.

$$$ chief . . .

From page B1

percent of its merger offer, BSD president Nestor Tan said in an interview.

"It's just a way for the new chair and we supported her because we believe she's capable and she's the good for the organization," Tan said.

He said SHGO's offer was an entirely different matter for the shareholders to vote on after studying the proposal.

Tan said the SEC would still have to complete its own assessment and would have to prove to

In consideration that the deal would be good for them.

Asked whether he was confident that SHO's offer would progress, Tan said: "I don't know."

Both Pay and Ay were not available for comment as of press time.

BPGR reported a 32-percent jump in net profit to ₱2.5 billion in 2005, but the figure could be subject to revision as it was not yet fully compliant with new financial reporting standards (IAS).

New BOT . . .

From page B1

planation note.

The bill likewise calls for the creation of public-private infrastructure development committee, which will formulate policies regarding private sector investments, establish and modify current infrastructure plans to encourage more private sector participation, and promote private investments.

The committee will be an inter-agency body composed of representatives from various government agencies like the Department of Budget and Management, and from private sector groups like the Philippine Construction Association.

Salceda said his proposed amendment to the BOT Law sought to streamline a clear-cut policy on government support to private sector investment projects, and to institutionalize a fair, honest and competitive procurement process.

Cocktales

From page B2

decided to bring back a more competitively priced Echo, to be renamed Tom. After its European

somewhat, early next year.

(Email cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

MOTORING

E-mail: jc_motoring@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Ernie D. Pangaranan

SUV showdown from entry level to ultra luxury

Text by Boots R. Salazar
Photos by Ulysses Ang, motocars.com

SPORTS UTILITY VEHICLES showed they would never wane in popularity despite oil price increases as they flaunted their stuff from Feb. 16 to 19 at a private track in Forest Hills, Angeles, Pital, during the fifth track of the second Car Of The Year (Cory) test-fest.

Luxury SUVs that went through intro-assisted and subbotnik tests were Lodge Passages Limited, Ford Explorer Eddie Bauer, Isuzu Alterra 4WD, Kia Sorento CRDi, Mitsubishi Montero Sport GLS and the Subaru B9 Tribeca Limited by Viking Cars.

The only level SUVs that participated were Honda CR-V 2.4 i-VTEC, Hyundai Tucson 4x2 CRDi, Mazda Tribute 3.0 V6, Nissan X-Trail 2500 and Toyota Fortuner 2.5G.

The Mercedes-Benz ML 350 was the lone entry in the ultra-luxury SUV category last weekend.

Mediumsize Chrysler 300C, for the luxury car category, also underwent testing last weekend.

Other vehicles that didn't make it during the respective category-slams will be tested on the 8th, 23 and 26 "catch up" test fest. BMW is fielding in its 3 to 5 series and X3, and X5 this weekend.

The next 60 motoring journalists from the Philippines—comprising the Car Awards Tonsip Inc. (Cogic)—had last concluded the fifth week of a scheduled two-month test-fest involving putting the vying cars at their paces and rating "bullets" based on the vehicles' actual measured performances and the journalists' "feel" of the drive.

Tests

The included course at Forest Hills tests an engine's torque going a steep 35-degree incline, it reveals grossly untrue suspensions. How? The tracks off-camber turns, downhill runs and even a washed dip can lift unbroken off-body tires out of early 30 kilometers per hour.

A series of fast and slow courses can test a gearbox's responsiveness, be it manual or automatic. Several cut de sacs can test the turning radius of a car or truck. Braking tests are also done in the course.

The unveiling of the Cars of the Year, Philippines is set on March 30 at the Rockwell, Tent. The Powerplant Mall, Makati City. The public unveiling of The winners will coincide with the opening of the Manila International Motor Show on April 6 at the World Trade Center, Roxas Boulevard.

Cory-P is sponsored by the Manila Motor Show, Rockwell Land Corp., Philippine Allied Corp. (sole distributor of Bridgestone tires in the country), Petron, Standard Insurance, road safety advocate Federal Express Corp., Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC), Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), Automobile Association Philippines (AAP), Fusion & Motorsports and motorcars.com.

A SUBW of SUVs with Chrysler 300C in Forest Hills Golf and Country Club in Antipolo

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CR-V 2WD 16" MT	P1,363,000	P158,460	P20,424	P531,500	P11,789
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Toyota introduces new prexy

LEADING AUTOMOTIVE company Toyota Motor Philippines has officially introduced its new president, Hiroshi Ito, who began his assignment in the Philippines last February. Ito is the successor of Hirohisa Tahara, who concluded his four-year term as TMP president.

Ito brings with him more than 30 years of experience with Toyota Motor Corp., the world's second largest automaker, and 16 global distributors in North America and Toronto region. He graduated from college in Japan's Hiroshima University with a degree in Economics.

Experience

His experience with Toyota started in 1975 when he headed efforts concerning Africa Division. Starting this time, he took the opportunity to expand his knowledge with an MBA in University of Penn (Wharton) in the United States.

In 1981, he became senior executive concerning for many operations of Toyota Motor Sales, US. After five years, he returned to TMC where he became manager of North America Division, and was later assigned as deputy general manager of International Public Affairs Division.

His global experience was further enhanced with his most recent assignment as executive director of Toyota New Zealand Ltd. from 2001 to 2005.

Norkis reassesses subcompact models

By Charles F. Bahas

WHEN THE FIRST BATCHES OF second-hand Daihatsu Hijet and Suzuki Alto units were delivered to Norkis' assembly plant in Sampaloc, Cebu in 2004, the people there knew right away they have the foundation to build a car for the masses.

"While gasoline prices on the rise motorists will inevitably forking over fistfuls of pesos to power their cars, we can see opportunity not only to market more fuel-efficient vehicle models, but also to grab importance market shares in the process," said Stefanie Quimsing Jr., founder and chair of Norkis Group, which unveils the two Japan-sourced vehicle models through its subsidiary, Porta Cool Industrial Corp. Inc. (PCIC).

The result was the launch and subsequent marketing of the five-door hatchback Privacy Commander and the three-door hatchback Privacy Roadster in the Philippines last year.

At odds

This move by Norkis to market small, low powered cars is clearly at odds with a lot of Filipino consumers' apparently overwhelming desire for bigger, more powerful vehicles, and no one expects the Privacy Commander and the Privacy Roadster to reverse that trend.

As a matter of fact, Norkis' move is often of-lament. "But motorists compare bites of the Japanese subcompact and vehicle yourself.

"The Privacy Commander and the Privacy Roadster strike a practical mode of transport especially if one is just going for a short commute or when driving within the city where traffic is usually heavy and parking isn't a hard to find," he said.

Changing requirements

But for Quimsing, Quimsing said these buyers are also changing when it comes to their require-

ments for having a subcompact car like the Privacy Commander and the Privacy Roadster.

"While before subcompact cars were made as cheaply as possible for entry-level consumers, that attitude has changed. Buyers now want something more: other than just good fuel mileage and low price," he said.

It was this reason Quimsing and Norkis is now looking for ways to make the two vehicle models more "hip" to its buyers.

Buyers now want something more other than just good fuel mileage and low price

Top priority

"Putting these two car models a top priority for Norkis. In fact, we are currently working on how to make these cars look cool as well as to drive," he said.

Quimsing said a number of Data Privacy Commander and Privacy Roadster units are being outfitted with sportier trims as well as cool design elements to give it a youthful and fun appearance.

"We want to sell these vehicles to the younger segment of the market so we are looking into several designs that would appeal to them," explained Quimsing, who added that if gasoline prices remain high, the company should be ready with these redesigned variants soon as consumers may be forced to shift down to smaller vehicles.

Three's the charm

PROMOTIONAL EVENTS IN THE MOTORING industry are usually cut and dry propositions. There's the usual product launch, more sometimes done postponding for a corporate event complete with the usual weather woes, and the lure of the motorcycle driver, when manufacturers hope against hope that the hosts from the motoring business and the lifestyle beats don't choose that particular day to hold their own. Bonus still on the full on speed sessions—track

MY DRIFT

André Bahas

day that allow the vehicle dynamics and interior features of the test units to prevail.

Finding the right fit and flavor for an event is a very elusive and often frustrated by a myriad few unseen details. Once in a while though, there comes along a bit of a left-field surprise with the event organizers' notion of product demonstration, but not unacceptable. Alright, I'll admit that "unimpressed" would be a more polite term to describe my attitude to some past events for the motoring media.

Recall early the issue of displaying the silhouettes of three new Comfort motor bodies every which way. IMO, it needed a whole trip out of the box for an answer. Let me put it to the motoring public then. What if you're put on interesting vehicle features a new mind and test way to open and read your car, how would you attempt to introduce it to some of the more jaded members of the press?

Right off the top of my mind, the 30-minute infomercial sounds like the right solution. Given a car to play but crucial to the purchase decision, but I cannot imagine a car being bought through this marketing method. "Call now and get a free set of floor mats with your new SUV"—but truth, if you are among the first 50 callers, get a pair of Italian shoes for your next race meet!" I didn't think you'd appreciate her.

Cars and their features are better taken in the sense of a drive, an exhaustive shape-for-size level of difficulty like to become this particular Comfort Access system, was handed us the E90 3-Series, a miracle that demands to be driven to be truly appreciated.

Gymkhana

Enter the ground concept of a gymkhana. Take one short, tight and technical course, preferably to the pushing bit of a countercoil manufacturer, sprinkle liberally with cones, stir in a few reverse gear turns and toss out of our-of-car chair and voila: An interesting time is more or less assured. With the concept for the two-seater folding sequence—and I'm sure you have to would use features at keyless entry and start-up system? Assuredly, shopping bags were the question at this moment.

Each driver was seated to demonstrate the all-important keys of the rental's designated 320i from under a glass case, and then underwent pick up two whole arsenals of shopping bags. For women likely are treated to their domestic aversions, many of the male contestants proved with the large bags as if it were an everyday affair the driver was to assume the roles of 320i for the track session, the said shopping bags had to be deposited in the trunk of the vehicle.

Well, the fixed lid and the keyless door were supposed to be opened merely by a touch of the driver's hand, while the vehicle's keys were in the pockets or handbag of the contestant. The signal to start the engine of the vehicle is as complex that its operator is a newbie and allows both the driver and the spectator to be worked in a relatively easy fashion.

TURN TO B8

Traffic (police) traps

ARE YOUR HORNS TRIGGER HAPPY? Whenever you have to drive through crowded Metro Manila traffic? Well, you could be in violation under the traps set by traffic authorities for motorists.

One such trap is found at the corners of Ortigas Avenue and Connecticut Street beside the Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan. If you intend to take right from Connecticut to Ortigas, toward Santolan Road, you will see a sign posted on the corner saying: "Bawal ngbusina sa loob nito."

As a motorist, you would interpret the sign to mean that you are now right on Ortigas, even when the light is red, if you wait for a gap in the oncoming traffic. That is how I interpreted it a few weeks ago, as even though I was two cars from the intersection, I was already cautioned by a traffic enforcer behind the bushes and charged with "nonverbal."

Stopped

Then I carefully moved toward the billboard near it. I intended to turn on Wilson Street. The two MMDA officers immediately stopped me. When I politely asked them why, citing the respectful "Sir," one of them said that I had committed a traffic violation by I moving right when the light was red.

And when I politely told them about the red-lit sign on the corner saying "Bawal ng busina dito," he answered that the sign meant the motorists could not sight at my there, but only on the service road, and on Ortigas Avenue itself. So why doesn't the sign include the words "On the service road"? I failed further to ask, knowing how useless it is to argue with the MMDA.

Another traffic gotcha trap is found at the corner of Shaw Avenue and Shaw Road in Pasubuque. If you are driving along Shaw Avenue toward and plan to turn right on Shaw Road to go to the Philippine Airlines' Main Terminal 2, be sure to stick to the rightmost lane of Shaw Avenue because many motorists before reaching the corner Dela Cruise you may be apprehended by a traffic enforcer lurking behind the bushes and charged with "nonwiring."

Ironic

What's ironic about the "nonwiring" thing is that motorists have to do a lot of nonwiring to avoid being blocked or hit by reckless motoring U-turns are usually predominated with 2-turns. When it comes to U-turns set up by the MMDA, swerving is perfectly okay and safe.

ON THE ROAD

Aiden Ser Mio-Hovadoza

When it comes to U-turns set up by the MMDA, swerving is perfectly okay and safe

Before Manila Mayor Lito Atienza installed the flagwalk with its huge, seconds-counting traffic lights on Roxas Boulevard, there was a traffic light at the Pedro Gil-Osmeña Highway intersection. Drivers nearing left on Pedro Gil from Nakpil Blvd. had to wait for the traffic light to turn green, but those proceeding along Roxas Blvd. toward Baclay City did not have to since there was no traffic entering Roxas boulevard's left.

I remember once nearing a yellow light at that very spot on my way to the Philippine Plaza Hotel. A policeman, seemingly approaching out of nowhere, stopped me. He showed me a handwritten list of traffic violations with the corresponding fines and told me to pay up for burning a red light. Naturally, the fine was unusually heavy because he had probably written the list of fines himself.

Best story

But the best traffic (police) trap story comes from a friend, of mine, a businesswoman, who was visiting from an appointment in Fort Bonifacio to a meeting at a restaurant in the Rada Center, a hundred kilometers away. Along the way, by Road, she quickly turned left from Ayala Avenue into Reed Drive, Ayala Center, although the traffic light was in a right green.

A policeman stopped her and asked for her driver's license. Since she wanted to get to her meeting on time, the businesswoman handed over a hundred-peso bill together with her license and said, "Pampasuwerte na kayo. Isa na ito sa inyong. Have patience, boss. I'm already late for a meeting." The policeman grinned and replied, "Ma'am, maganda pasikara, di ito. (Ma'am, there was more of us, sir.)"

TODAY'S DRIVER STICKER: Computers help us to do stupid things faster.

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The law is there to protect our roads from getting destroyed so easily

On truckers and a letter from Gumaca

GREED IS WHAT MAKES MANY of our truckers break the law. I say this in light of the recent dastardly act made by truckers when they recently blocked the road leading to the North Luzon Expressway in protest of the oil price hike.

Because Flag de Amor, the upright MLH-affiliated, issues the issue-overweight trucks impounded at MLH as matters relief, truckers countered by the fodder of arsonist. Black the park of law-abiding citizen who fight for their RIGHTS.

Only in the Philippines.

Here's another case of a law that an ours republic citizen would implemented to the tilt but it being has-need—overall unenforced. Israel only. Israel—by the-by-heads-no-shoulders-for-it-sakers.

The law (Republic Act 4136) or the Anti-Overloading Law) says the weight limit for vehicles allowed to use our roads nationwide is 13.5 metric tons per axle. Everybody follows the law—or else, many more of our routes would be closed.

Thus, the law has been overstepped by heinous sheer sinar awareness. It—sinar, because of corruption mainly committed by many of our authorities (Philippine National Police and Land Transportation Office) that are supposed to enforce it.

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

The law is there to protect our roads from getting destroyed so easily.

Also, seemingly only Flag de Amor issues a implement—and yes, with the toughness of a jell noodles.

How you know why our roads, our national roads mostly, are always in ancient state of disrepair.

Don't blind, Pinoy. The people are behind you.

• • •

Here's a letter from the Libertarian edition, Dennis L. Evora, a great son of Gumaca, Quezon.

"Your columns regarding the sad state of Mabolibla highway tonight my interest. Sad, why sad? My family and I endured a punishing ride while we went on a week-long vacation during the holidays in Gumaca, Quezon.

"Our bodies ached upon arrival in Gumaca, which is eight hours away from Olongapo. The trip was pure hell.

"Anyone well-known, I cannot say more in Gumaca, birthplace of the great Sen. Lorenzo Tañada, before bar intervened and transplanted me in Olongapo City.

"Indeed, the road condition was a shame and I share the frustration and anger of the Tayabas letter senders.

"There's no doubt that the quality of the roads left much to be desired and as a taxpayer I challenge not only Quezon's political leaders but those concerned with the highways department to wake up and think of the common good.

"Something is horribly wrong at Mabolibla way. On the way to Gumaca, we used the old zigzag and we're surprised to note that sometimes movements bend the road.

"Going back to Olongapo, we used the zigzag direction road and it was a easy, easy bad direction. The roads were narrow, there were no shoulders made by Lucas Pagbilao, etc., there was no bad that I needed to celebrate as driving synergism.

"It is gladdening that a popular and respected columnist heard these to write about the sorrowful state of the Maharlikan. I very well know that while you're a Pangasinanese, you've fallen in love with a Quezonian—Nora Calaunay.

"Mahirap na ang kasali kaysa sa wala. Sana ay mabasa ng mga taga-Quezon, hindi ang nakakaraming Marahas pero mga mabait at di-lasing Pinoy mga.

"I hope that things will be different next year because I can't escape the lure of my hometown and will certainly come back.

"By the way, my high school classmates told me that a buddy from the Philippine Personnel Army (now National) High School is now calling the shots at Region IV highways department.

"So, I call on 05, if he still remembers me, to fire up to the spirit of the Commonwealth. I remain confident that the-class-no-gbayan, a model student and steps commander during his GMDS days, will be up to the task and will not disappoint his kababayan.

"Many of hamaks, which means in Ilgin, is the summer grass in Gumaca by its original inhabitants. Sana'ng excellent roads."

• • •

QUOTE ME: Here array would be-cadaver by bringing out in the open the lies by impeachment, and saying inside the vehicle when asking for someone.

Three's the charm

From page B7

Cone-laden course

Once underway, under the professional tutelage of expert wheelmen Arsi Mauro Isidro Ramirez, each driver had to climb the cone-laden course in the least amount of time. Dropped cones would translate into time penalties so no one that one could like the afternoon's results sweep with any such infraction.

For the record, BMW Philippines' Lito Cattilan racked up the fastest rubber-burning time of the day. The course was first run in reverse with the cumulative team time coming to a stop once the last person out of the car and the last back in the plane-zone.

The 36 or so cyclists never had a chance. Once the starting gun placed the tones of C3 Magazine's Inga Sison and the writer to the same timed run, I was confident that the issue was for all intents and purposes, settled. Between Inga's wheels, steady and-creative speeds-to-the-DH and my-(left, when no approach to the Tin of Quick Movement with Wife's Shopping, victory was, quite literally, in the bag.

Both of us took home an E90 for first event, with most taking a prominent, prominent space of my place of work. The car is on top of my computer monitor, right next to the cone, allowing me to motivate-spit to-scale model lives, in a desperate attempt to help overcome writer's block. Just like today.

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Supreme Court through its Committee on Bids invites prospective bidders who are authorized, technically and financially, to participate in the bidding for the following:

Name of Project	Approved Budget	Source of Funding
LOT I – OFFICE SUPPLIES (Lot Cost P10,000.00)	₱ 10,000.00	General Appropriations Act, 2006
LOT II – PRINTING SUPPLIES (Lot Cost P1,000,000.00)	₱ 1,000,000.00	General Appropriations Act, 2006
LOT III – RUBBER BAND SUPPLIES (Lot Cost P1,000,000.00)	₱ 1,000,000.00	General Appropriations Act, 2006
LOT IV – HEALTH PACKAGE, TUBES, AND MEDICINE (Lot Cost P1,000,000.00)	₱ 1,000,000.00	General Appropriations Act, 2006
LOT V – SUPPLIES AND MEDICINE (Lot Cost P1,000,000.00)	₱ 1,000,000.00	General Appropriations Act, 2006
LOT VI – OTHER MEDICINE (Lot Cost P1,000,000.00)	₱ 1,000,000.00	General Appropriations Act, 2006

PERIOD OF DELIVERY: Twenty five (25) calendar days after issuance of Purchase Order (P.O.)

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

A. FOR LOT I, LOT II AND LOT V

1. PRE-BID CONFERENCE

The pre-bid conference will be held on:

Date: 01 March 2006, Wednesday
Venue: Conference Room, Ground Floor, Commercial Building, Supreme Court Complex, Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila
Time: 2:00 a.m. (for Lot I)
2:30 a.m. (for Lot II)
3:00 a.m. (for Lot V)

2. SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND OPENING OF BIDS

On the bidding, the legal requirements for eligibility of prospective bidders must be submitted and verified during the pre-bid conference and only those who will be declared 'eligible' in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives, as the case may be.

Date: 07 March 2006, Wednesday
Venue: Conference Room, Ground Floor, Commercial Building, Supreme Court Complex, Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila
Time: 10:00 a.m. (for Lot I)
10:30 a.m. (for Lot II)
11:00 a.m. (for Lot V)

B. FOR LOT III, LOT IV, AND LOT VI

1. PRE-BID CONFERENCE

The pre-bid conference will be held on:

Date: 02 March 2006, Friday
Venue: Conference Room, Ground Floor, Commercial Building, Supreme Court Complex, Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila
Time: 2:00 a.m. (for Lot III)
2:30 a.m. (for Lot IV)
3:00 a.m. (for Lot VI)

2. SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND OPENING OF BIDS

On the bidding, the legal requirements for eligibility of prospective bidders must be submitted and verified during the pre-bid conference and only those who will be declared 'eligible' in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives, as the case may be.

Date: 07 March 2006, Friday
Venue: Conference Room, Ground Floor, Commercial Building, Supreme Court Complex, Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila
Time: 10:00 a.m. (for Lot III)
10:30 a.m. (for Lot IV)
11:00 a.m. (for Lot VI)

Prospective bidders must not be related to the head of the procuring entity or any member of the Committee on Bids or to the relatives within the fourth civil degree of consanguinity or affinity, to the third civil degree.

Interested bidders may secure eligibility requirements and bidding documents from the Secretariat, Committee on Bids, Property Division, 3rd Floor Annex Building, Supreme Court Complex, Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila upon Payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) for Lot I, Lot II, Lot III, Lot IV, Lot V, and Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) for Lot VI, payable to the Supreme Court Collection Officer. Prospective bidders may also secure the Bidding Documents from the Secretariat, Atty. Ernest B. Abalajon at telefax no. 521-1191 (136), Benito C. Jones at tel. no. 521-8475.

The Committee on Bids reserves the right to: 1) reject any or all bids, 2) waive any defects in any bid submitted thereon, 3) award any Lot to more than one bidder if only one bidder is responsive to the requirements or bid/offer to the government.

15 February 2006

(Sgd.) JOSEY F. PEREZ
Chairman

Republic of the Philippines
DAVAO CITY WATER DISTRICT
MacArthur Highway, Davao City
Tel. 8224-0000

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

1. The Davao City Water District, under the Approved Budget for CY 2006 intends to apply the amount of [illegible] being the ABC to cover the cost of [illegible] and invites eligible contractors to participate in the bidding for the [illegible] as described in the Terms of Reference.

2. The Terms of Reference (TOR) may be obtained from the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat upon payment of a non-refundable fee of [illegible] pesos (P[illegible]).

REQUEST RECEIVED	[illegible]
DATE OF PRE-BID CONFERENCE	[illegible]
DEADLINE OF SUBMISSION OF BIDS	[illegible]

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act". Bidders should have completed, within the last [illegible] years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible contract is limited to [illegible] and must be received by the prospective bidder.

4. Prospective bidders may obtain further information from the Davao City Water District and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during [illegible] to [illegible] from [illegible] to [illegible].

5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of

BID DOCUMENTS	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]

The method of payment will be in Cash Basis. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative.

6. The Davao City Water District reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect therein, and to accept the bid most advantageous to the government. It also reserves the right to annul the bidding process, and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Davao City Water District
By:
[illegible]
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
[illegible]
[illegible]

Republic of the Philippines
QUIRINO STATE COLLEGE
Diffun, Quirino
Telefax: (078) 326-15-08

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF TRAILER MOUNTED HYDRAULIC DRILLING MACHINE FOR DEEP WELL DRILLING
(QUIRINO STATE COLLEGE)

The Quirino State College (QSC) invites all authentic Bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply and delivery of Trailer Mounted Drilling Machine for Deep Well Drilling, Quirino State College, Diffun, Quirino.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in RA 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Bidders should have completed within the last [illegible] years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. Bidders must have a verifiable track record of this type as a member of the Philippine Drilling Machine or various organizations (Philippine Contractors Association, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, etc.) and must meet the minimum eligibility requirements stated in the eligibility documents.

Interested bidders shall secure the eligibility documents at the Bids and Awards Committee, Julian A. Mayano Hall, Quirino State College, Diffun, Quirino, with telefax no. (078) 326-15-08 from [illegible] to [illegible] or from [illegible] and submit duly accomplished Eligibility Documents not later than [illegible].

The Eligibility & Bidding Requirements and schedule of activities are as follows:

Approved Budget for the Contract (P1,000,000.00)	
Issuance and Eligibility & Bidding Documents	February 16-21, 2006 (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) QSC Diffun, Quirino
Deadline of Submission of Eligibility Documents	February 28, 2006, 2:00 p.m. - Bids and Awards Committee Office, QSC Diffun, Quirino
Pre-Bid Conference	March 6, 2006
Submission and Opening of Bids	March 20, 2006, 9:00 a.m. - Julian A. Mayano Hall, QSC Diffun, Quirino
Cost of Bidding Documents	P1,000.00 (non-refundable)

Application for eligibility will be based on a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria prescribed in the Eligibility Documents. Only Bidders passing the eligibility check can participate in the Pre-Bidding Conference.

QSC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) ARNOLD G. ABRIGUEN
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

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Interested parties may submit their letter of intent, company or business profile, copy of business permit and BIR papers, supplier and bank references, and other pertinent credentials to Unit 1402, VC Arellano Building, Ayala Avenue cor. Makati Avenue, Makati Manila. Areas open are Cagayan Region, Ilocos Region, North Luzon, Cavite, Bataan, Bohol, Mindoro, Boracay, Iloilo, and Cebu. Samira City. For inquiries, call 721 4078, 722-4373, or 0915-9949147.

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Cosmoderm CoQ10 gives those person peaches to aging skin. Moisture, nourishes, and revitalizes CoQ10 Cosmoderm 10% is a new, light textured cleanser which removes make-up and impurities effectively. CoQ10 Toning Lotion tones, revitalizes and moisturizes the appearance of uneven skin while preventing skin elasticity and firmness. It removes any residue left after cleansing. Moisturizer and protect with CoQ10 Day Moisturizer SPF 15, provides intensive moisturization to nourish and revitalize aging skin. CoQ10 Revival Night Cream replenishes skin with vital nutrients while you sleep. CoQ10 Eye Treatment Gel soothes, nourishes and revitalizes eyelids and eye contour areas to reduce the appearance of dark circles, puffiness and crow's feet.

Cosmoderm products are available at Watsons, SM Department Store, Robinsons Department Store, Mercury Drug, Rose Supermarket, Rustan's Supermarket and other leading stores. The skincare hotline is 636-1266.

Developing supervisory leadership

ATTENTION ALL LEADERS. Don't miss this high-impact program on the theme of empowering leadership for effective and energetic managers, insightful ideas and inspiring stories and practical applications derived from John Maxwell, Jack Welch, and other leadership gurus. It is slated on Feb. 24, 1 to 5 p.m. at BCBC, Makati. The seminar will have as its resource lecturer Irene Rebustillo, the head of Leadership Development Division of Philippine Daily Inquirer. She is a frequent resource speaker on supervision and leadership. The seminar is sponsored by Romy and Miles Inc, a premiere training company on business management, marketing, sales and human resource development, with offices at Room 1, Suite 2304-C, Tektite Tower, East, Ortigas Center. Call Romy at 636-77 91 to 20 for more information.

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Free leprosy screening at Jose Reyes Medical Center

FEB. 26 TO 28 IS NATIONAL LEPROSY CONTROL Week and the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center, Department of Dermatology, is offering free screening for likely carriers of leprosy patients and people with misdiagnosis, to minimize spread of this communicable disease. Visit the outpatient department of the Dermatology Department from 8 a.m. to 12 noon on Feb. 27to 28 at the 2nd floor of the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center, 3rd Avenue, Manila. Call Dr. Lolita Tiotuico at 711-6001 local 336 or 713-0703 for details.

PhilHealth
Your Partner in Health

11 Milestones in 2005

By Leilani Mae R. Sarghuan

THE COUNTRY'S SOLVENCY SOCIAL INSURANCE corporation continues to break barriers and to make new conquests in the area of public service. As it marks its 11th year in the health insurance industry, the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) takes a brief look at what could very well be 11 milestones in the year just past.

For starters, PhilHealth's efforts were recognized by the national government when February 2005 was declared National Health Insurance Program Month. Then in March, PhilHealth assumed the administration of the Overseas Workers' Medicare program from the Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration and dubbed it Overseas Workers Program. Finally, government health insurance programs for all sectors were integrated, allowing for better program management.

Soon after, PhilHealth made maternity care benefits and quality assurance more responsive. With the modified Normal Spontaneous Delivery Package, members can now reimburse drugs, medicines and supplies bought outside the maternity care facility if the provider's claim is less than the benefit package. New moms are also assured of a smooth through on breastfeeding practices, with partner hospitals now required to comply with provisions on Rooming-in and Breastfeeding.

A Social Weather Station survey in May revealed a 79 percent member-awareness on the program's transition from Medicare to PhilHealth and an overall client satisfaction rating of positive 37 points, providing room for improvement.

In June, PhilHealth solidified its partnership with such entities as the Philippine International Trading Corporation (PITC), the Philippine Association for Government Budget Administration (Pagbo) and the Association of Government Accountants of the Philippines (Agap). The partnership will PITC ways to increase access of members to high quality but low-priced medicines, and linkages with Pagbo and Agap were meant to ensure the accountability of the program through updated premium remittances and timely submission of reports.

Executive Order 452 was released, allowing PhilHealth to ensure the coverage of 2.5 million indigent families. This was primarily until the year ended, with more LGUs making representations with PhilHealth for the re-enrollment of their needy constituents.

Another milestone that was reached in 2005 was when the NHIP became the only government program to receive appropriations from the four major revenue generating measures—the E-VAT and the Sin Tax laws.

In the area of quality assurance, PhilHealth operationalized its Benchbook for Quality Performance, a map enabling accredited health care providers to maintain the highest standards in health care delivery.

PhilHealth closed 2005 with 12.6 million active members. This translates to about 54 million beneficiaries, pushing overall coverage to about 64 percent of the 85 million estimated RP population in 2005.

On the other hand, total health insurance benefits increased by an unprecedented 34.2 percent over 2004 figures with benefit payments reaching P16 billion in 2005. Collections likewise increased by more than nine percent with total premium contributions breaching the P18 billion mark.

Work on PhilHealth's corporate re-engineering was completed. After a very comprehensive and detailed process, PhilHealth was able to complete its work on an organization that would be able to address the demands of the present and prepare for the future.

Former PhilHealth President and CEO Dr. Francisco T. Duque III became the first Secretary of Health with a health financing background while Chief Operating Officer Lorna O. Fajardo continued the daunting and challenging task of administering the NHIP towards its 11th year anniversary.

Clearly, PhilHealth is determined to give its best to the millions who have entrusted to them their health insurance needs. And on its 11th year, PhilHealth intends to take a giant leap to greater achievements, taking each step slowly but surely.

64% of RP population now covered by PhilHealth

SIXTY FOUR PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY'S population now enjoy health insurance coverage under the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth).

In a pre-11th Anniversary media briefing held recently at the Annabel's Restaurant, Lorna O. Fajardo, officer-in-charge of the Office of the PhilHealth President and CEO said that at the close of 2005, PhilHealth registered a total active membership base of 12.5 million members, or about 54 million beneficiaries nationwide.

"This represents about 64 percent of the entire RP population of 85 million, bringing us closer to our goal of universal coverage," Fajardo said. She said that vigorous efforts at marketing the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP) to the five major sectors being served by PhilHealth, coupled by the national and local governments' support for the program, were the primary factors for this unprecedented membership record. The five sectors include the employed, the individually-paying, the non-paying, the sponsored and the overseas Filipino workers.

Fajardo added that the sponsored program for OFWs from the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) also contributed significantly to the increase in membership base. "Through our Overseas Workers Program, we were able to enlist more than 500,000 members by year-end," she said.

Of the estimated 54.5M beneficiaries, 41 percent comes from the private employed sector while about 26 percent comes from the sponsored sector. The government employed sector accounts for 15 percent while the individually paying sector accounts for 14 percent. The OFW sector accounts for 4.9 percent of the membership pie while the non-paying sector accounts for .6 percent of the entire membership distribution.

To date, PhilHealth has the biggest membership base among all other government social security agencies. It is open to self-employed individuals, to retirees and pensioners, to OFWs, as well as to indigent families whose coverage are sponsored by local government units, private companies and individuals. On the other hand, coverage is mandatory for government and private sector employees, including household employees.

CONGRATULATIONS!!

PhilHealth
on it's
11th YEAR
ANNIVERSARY

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PhilHealth
Your Partner in Health

Messages

Warmest felicitations to the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation on its 11th anniversary!

Healthcare as a basic service is also a basic right. It must be delivered to all our people, especially to those who do not have the access to it, by all means. My administration is determined to succeed in this front. Health reassurance, in particular, must be enjoyed by everyone. And it has been my desire to see every Filipino proudly holding a PhilHealth card, signifying medical coverage at any time of illness, and his peace of mind.

The National Health Insurance Program has already made a mark in every Filipino's life. More than half of the entire Filipino population now enjoys PhilHealth coverage—proof of its success in increasing our people's access to high quality, reliable and available medical care services.

As you enter your 11th year of dedicated service, I call on everyone in PhilHealth to sustain the zeal by which you have served our countrymen, especially the poor and the needy. May your achievements continue to inspire you in surpassing your targets for this year and the years to come.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

I convey my warmest congratulations to the men and women of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) as they celebrate 11 years of genuine public service.

As your Board Chair, I laud your unwavering efforts to overcome what seemed an insurmountable task of providing health insurance coverage for all Filipinos, especially the less fortunate. I am happy that you have all succeed on the task of expanding the coverage of the National Health Insurance Program, as well as ensuring that more and more of our members are actively paying their premium contributions.

I am glad to note that benefit payments have started P1B in 1995, an increase of about 14.2 percent from the previous year. This is a clear indicator of how stable PhilHealth is and assurance to how well you have all lived up to your commitment of being available pursuant to health. Your Anniversary theme, "Labing Tumitibing, Laging Maasahan" aptly explains this assertion.

As you face the challenges of yet another year, I urge you to continue your active pursuit of the highest quality of service in empowering you. I am confident that Team PhilHealth will not waver in its commitment, especially now that the BMP has made a difference in the lives of your members. Let us push on with our goal of serving more and more of our people!

FRANCISCO T. DUQUE III, MD, MBA
Secretary of Health

TEN-POINT AGENDA TO "BEAT THE ODDS" IN SIX YEARS UNDER THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION

"BEAT THE ODDS" - this will be our battle cry and agenda for the next six years"

--President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

What it sounds like:

B - Balanced budget
E - Education for all
A - Automated elections
T - Transport and digital infrastructure to connect the country

T - Terminate the MILF and NPA conflicts
H - Heal the wounds of EDSA
E - Electricity and water for all barangays

O - Opportunities for 10 million jobs
D - Decongest Metro Manila
DS - Develop Clark and Subic

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Celebrating his 50th Wedding Anniversary was just icing on the cake.

For Lolo Andy, discovering he had heart disease when he was 69 made him fearful for his and his wife's future. The uncertainty darkened their blissful life. Para sabunot sa kaputian sa ulap at bisan si ng mga gamot na binahaan ng research, Lolo Andy today lives happily and fruitfully despite his heart disease. Dahil sinagot ang gamot ni ya — gamot na gawa ng Pfizer. Pfizer not only saved his heart, it also helped him and his wife reach 50 years of a love filled life together. Definitely a milestone worth living for! Dahil nga si Lolo Andy, dahil makatulong ang bulay ang gamot dapat safe.

Zapat Suit:
Pfizer

BUSINESS

Gov't caps bids for 20-year bonds

Long-term T-bonds oversubscribed, volume of bids reached ₱6.3B

By Michelle V Rosca

THE 20-YEAR TREASURY BOND RATE dropped 3.3 basis points to 10.208 percent yesterday as the government received orders of the bids, claiming to have a healthy cash position.

The long-term government security fetched 30.21 basis points during the previous auction a month ago.

The 20-year bond was oversubscribed. Volume of bids reached ₱6.271 billion—over the government's programmed debt offering of ₱4 billion. The Bureau of the Treasury's auction committee only accepted 2.038 billion worth of tender bids as the rate fell below 10.20 percent.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said there was not much trading in the secondary market for the 10-year bond so there was no reason for the market to seek a higher rate.

Had the Treasury raised the ₱4 billion offering, the rate for the 20-year bond could have reached 10.395 percent, or higher than the last recorded.

Cruz said the lower rates of the 20-year bond in the secondary market lowered between 9.5 and 10.5 percent.

"On account of the very comfortable cash position of the government, I am not relying on that," Cruz said, referring to the higher rates sought by the bidders, during a press briefing yesterday.

Cruz said that, at present, the government is not pressured to accept high rates, unless they are reflective of the secondary market rates.

Since then the government is awash in cash, the Treasury is considering canceling the 20-year T-bond auction scheduled for Feb. 28, Cruz said. The government was supposed to borrow ₱4 billion through that auction.

He added that the Treasury might adjust the borrowing program for March by changing the amounts of the debt offerings through T-bills and bonds. The adjustment would depend on the cash vis-à-vis bond swap.

The swap now being promoted by the Treasury allows bondholders who still want to hold on to their securities to exchange their old debt instruments with issues of 3, 5 and 7 years with (bonds) issued bonds. The swap would extend the government's average maturity by about one year.

The swap for the 5-year bond was held last Feb. 15, while the swap for the two other issues will be held this Friday.

The government's programmed to swap P30 billion worth of new issues of 3-year bonds, P20 billion of 5-year bonds, and P20 billion of seven-year bonds.

If the volume of existing bonds offered for swap would not reach the minimum amounts set, then the Treasury would auction off the bonds for new cash, instead of merely engaging in swap, to meet the desired volumes.

Cruz said there should be a huge volume of trading of the freshly issued 3-, 5- and 7-year bonds to make it liquid and therefore complement efforts to develop the domestic capital market.

Coffee exports rose 40% to $5.3M in '05

By Ronnel W. Domingo

COFFEE EXPORT EARNINGS WENT UP BY 40 percent to $5.3 million in 2005 from $3.8 million in 2004 as the country maintains good standing with a global industry body that administers agreements among producing and consuming countries.

According to the International Coffee Organization Certifying Agency (Icoca) of the Department of Trade and Industry, the 2005 export figure was higher than the $4 million mental target.

Icoca said that last year's record was also more the $500,000 in export receipts posted in 2000, when the government and the coffee industry's stakeholders adopted Icoca forms, a tool leveraged in promoting the export of processed coffee.

The country's 2005 exports were composed mainly of soluble coffee, accounting for $5.2 million or 98 percent of the total receipts for roasted coffee, while green beans and roasted coffee accounted for the rest.

Icoca said Philippine-produced coffee maintained a loyal group of importers owing to the country's good standing as a member of the International Coffee Organization, which administers a trimmed Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) code for coffee.

About 52 percent, or 31,040 kilograms, of the raw coffee beans shipped out were to Oman, while cajuri and Ghana accounted for a combined 3,499 kg.

As for soluble coffee, 1.4 metric tons or 77,644 cases went to Japan; 172,440 or 9 percent went to Greece; 126 MT or 6 percent went to Cyprus; 70 MT or 4 percent to Spain, and the rest were spread out to Thailand, Turkey (94), Indonesia, Italy, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Hawaii, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, and the United States.

Also, Icoca accredited seven new coffee exporters last year under its special export certification. The exporters accounted for some $200,000 worth of coffee exports in 2005.

Panalo ka sa kakaibang negosyong ito!

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PLDT Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan

Chief to Chiefs

PLDT Mounts a "Really Cool" Showcase

Corporate Business Group SVP Eric R. Alberto

"A key role of the general mass we have now been on really cool" said Albelda Inc. "as a matter of fact, it was the best one we've ever been on." The meeting recorded 15 participants was clearly as effective as he was hoped. PLDT Senior Vice President Corporate (SVP), CBG, (SVP) was an occasion for these world-hopping warriors scouting the globe for customers and competitors to do business with.

As the ICT and BPO industries have registered continuous 100 percent annual increases in this country, the Philippines is looking to be the destination of choice for international investors. "We will be managing the data and network that no one in the country has for the next two years," said PLDT SVP for the Corporate Business Solutions Group Eric Alberto. "PLDT has the infrastructure, current business relationships and in the same time partners with marketers and the government."

For this meeting he drove home the key advantages that the Philippines and PLDT possesses that are increasingly attractive to investors. "The four competitive ingredients we have are our high cost competitive rates through high quality human capital, a robust, diversified telco infrastructure, a globally competitive real estate market and access and value to politically stable markets."

PLDT Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan reiterated the company's commitment to maintain this positive investor climate. "We have three levels of commitment: we invest in infrastructure, originally PLDT's legacy into IP based services; to our people who are acquiring more depth in IT skills; and to innovation. We need innovation to survive."

At the end of the evening, Alberto said, "We have just exceeded our expectations. Everything we set up during all of the years the whole Philippine team has is something we want to impart for our new presentations." It was evidently a sentiment shared by his impressed entourage.

© Local Chairman Abraham Ace poses in front of a PLDT-enabled "Virtual Room"

LIFESTYLE

Remembering EDSA

We may have been kids then, but the Edsa Revolution made an impact on our lives, too.

In this special section, 2bU! remembers Edsa —what it was then and what it means to us now

Celebrating true people power

How many of us see this holiday for what it really is?

By Angelo V. Ignacio
2bU! Correspondent

THE FIRST EDSA REVOLUTION constitutes one of the earliest memories I have as a kid. I remember escaping downstairs into the basement and sewing my mind and her college friends making paper yellow papios and hands and other paraphernalia.

I was barely 5 years old, but I felt there was something important going on, so I eagerly [illegible] to say no to [illegible]. Little did Ghanem Bad Bakery was about to happen, and I was [illegible] a part of it.

[illegible] years later, the same thing happened, another person, another uprising, another Edsa gathering. By then, I was old enough to understand, but I felt that this one was different, and it wasn't necessarily good.

Kids were there to one and be seen, hoping to spot some celebrity or bump into their crushes. Supporters were greeted not by a sense of camaraderie, but by monetary promises. Celebrities publicly announced their support for this or that politician to boost their popularity ratings or worse, to become politicians themselves.

It was a golden opportunity for advertising brands and media culture-vultures were ready to pounce and prey on anyone and anything

(SUBMENU)

'In this world, everything is pardoned in advance and therefore everything is cynically permitted.' —Milan Kundera

Memory and forgetting

Dickson Marinas
Contributor

MILAN KUNDERA once said, "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" tackles Kundera's index of eternal return. Nietzsche's version we encounter experienced, but this time, when disappears once and for all, which does not return, is like a shadow, without weight, dead in advance and already has one foot in the past, neutralized or sublime, neither beauty and sublimity more exciting, shining, nothing in the destiny of the world."

The idea of eternal return, according to Kundera, implies a perspective on things which does not appear other than we know them; they appear without the tempering circumstances of their transient nature. "This antiquating circumstance is what gives nostalgia its magic overlay, for how can we condemn something that is ephemeral, as human? In the sunset of dissolution, everything is illuminated by the most beautiful light."

In the aftermath of People Power revolution of 1986, we find proof of these sayings. This monumental event, precisely because of its historical value, has been an unpleasant memory for consumers that it relegates to unconsciousness.

I never learn about Marcos. I was too young to comprehend what was happening when it was happening. My understanding came later. So I associated the many atrocities committed by him against the Filipinos not as tremendous monstrosity, but as something that was normal, if not as by the revelations to his presidency.

Many critics say are Filipinos forget too easily, that's a couple of years later, the Marcoses had returned to power. Perhaps we have forgotten them. Perhaps we are, from time to time, from cynically, the future pardons everything that was ever happened in the past because its existence cares itself to it, however dark it may be. It will have just been a bad moment in history, it will just a multitude of messages and interpretations. It will become history with inconsistencies and corollary. Ages will come to consider "Imta could not like have changed if this or that happened," and despite how much they may threaten or complain, they will owe their existence to it, because, for long only one life to lead, there is no reality save that any can refash his existence.

We are things the way they are because of their worn difficult, we would not be here to see it reflection." An essence of quantum physics says.

History in action

History is constantly and ubiquitously concerned for each notice of every human being. This fable as time. If we have a presence we deserve, it is only because we have memories, just as if we exist in a world we have, it is only because we are encountered in it.

We forget. We forget because we have no history at all. Without history, life has no pattern and context, and it is removed from being part of our "greater scheme." It is a life that cannot occur, devoid in achievement, meaning nothing and doing nothing.

Is this, then, why we remember? Is our up in the same recognition? Some after the memories struggle of People Power I, the Marcoses and his cronies have increased. Years after the passion that inflamed People Power II, Lat Ejercito a senator and Erap is threatening to be released. The Ocampo tragedy, the Dizon tragedy and all those tragedies that could have resulted with a little less foresight—all strips from a lack of hindsight, a lack of insight into what needs to be done as soon. We celebrate the wisdom of the past.

Time, for example, the eternal lover. Inaudible—how many times within just this decade, has Imelda in the north overthrown our country once more? What an appropriate metaphor for our collective memory. We remember for a while, and then cower as the monster—eventually leading to an overthrow. That is why life in this country isn't quite tragedy of the comic.

Some say our forgetfulness is the source of our happiness. We are one of the top 20 happiest countries in the world despite our problems. Perhaps our memory says. Some say our forgetfulness can be the source of our forgiveness. It's gotten to that we define the quality, who we shouldn't even be allowing to come freely, off the hook. More than that, because of our forgetfulness can. Or, the source of our massive like relevance for living under the worst bad conditions ever and even again without what we desperately need to change.

Our forgetfulness is obviously not serving as anymore. Time for pressure and retribution comes from remembering, from reliving. True happiness comes from the knowledge that pain is an inflicted pain. The past isn't something we overcome, but something we build on, something we, if the very least, learn from—the safety of our future, living up to the expectations of whatever sacrifices hope we can muster. We mustn't allow ourselves the luxury of forgetting.

Celebrating

From page A11

words, accommodating. Compared with the first, this was more like a relaxed dorm party gone wrong. At least, that's how it seemed to me, because I was actually there.

And the third Edsa? Some people even think there really was no third. But I was just in my element. I made abundance rather than a tense life rally. But we're talking that to the future.

Reasons

So, there were people who were there for the right reasons. But there were also those who were there for the wrong ones. And yes, we got what we wanted—a corrupt leader overthrown and a supposedly better one elected. To take his place.

But something was definitely missing. There was virtually no spirit, no connections, no unity. Boxes to the masses between opinion struggle between the classes. The unconscious split was half-hearted. It became a whole, a conception of half-hearted consciousness ruled over mind.

Ultimately, what were we left with? Nothing but a hollow victory and tons of garbage, both on the streets and in the psyche of the nation.

With our country not having become better, it's only a matter of time before an Edsa Quatro starts. But how much more must suffer must we endure before the rebels finally get it right? Or must we?

In the famous city said, "Jesus, no, adios no." Edsa, Edsa Dos, Edsa Tres... No matter how many Edsa rallies we mount... only one wish has the right order given the direction.

The People Power Revolution of 1986 was, hands down, a visual sample of democracy. The whole world watched as it came on the power swayed groveling on their knees and we stood up, while the rich stopped looking down. Check mates and learned to see eye to eye with everyone else. It was all about unity and equality. That goal, one voice. Will just how many of us see this holiday for what it really is?

Optimism

I confess that I am not the most loyal citizen. I have my own preoccupations to deal with, and God knows how often I have complained about the present and gazed for the future of this country.

But while I lack in patriotism, I make up for through optimism, even blind idealism at times. How do we achieve the goals we've glimpsed in the Edsa revolution? Educate the masses. Feed the poor. Give education. Quit voting to countries the president and focus on finding a better one. Stop being apathetic and start caring.

Of course, that's easier said than done. And I believe that if you can't do it yourself, then at least see it, so that others in a better position can hear it and do something about it.

Perception, it's not the fight that's important. It's what we're ultimately fighting for. Despite the political cancer and looming threats of nuking I know that deep down, all is bound to prevail.

In reality, it would be about more than saying that about celebrating it. Today is the "I sign will sound" not but "Jesus," but the "Jesus," just as it did years ago.

Today, we will quit whining and start taking action. Today, we will forget from deep inside. Edsa and we will be celebrating specifically we can still pick up the pieces.

Today, we will remember Edsa. And be proud of who we are once again.

E-mail the author at anak_ni_rizal@yahoo.com

Comics Revolutions

A dispatch from Wondercon, the mecca of comics lovers in San Francisco

Text and photos by Cox Cotanguan

WONDERCON IS THE MECCA for every avid comic collector. The first major comic convention of the year, it was held in San Francisco on the 19-21. In celebration of its 20th year, Wondercon's lineup was composed of the biggest names in comics, from artist to independent publishers.

Once only visited the big deal area. Comics happen to be a part of popular culture the world over, its narratives and images are a powerful expression of cultural worldviews. So we always need guns and battle. Sometimes, it pushes full of dreams, a lot of passion, and a narrative array is enough to chain the world off its tilt.

Wondercon's last filled three-day event of local comic book signings, panel discussions, award screenings, gaming, exhibits, charity auctions and fan films. Attendees came in droves—while there were those who were there for the latest and hottest, The main hall was filled with booths, selling rare comics from the Golden Age down to the present, as well as t-shirts, trading cards, toys and other collectibles—the perfect haven that comes annually to Geekdom.

Talks were held in various rooms of the Moscone Silver Center, coinciding with other events. Speakers ranged from large, long-time, the world's finest cartoonists, to the emerging and biggest. Frank Miller, Speaking to a standing-room-only fan appreciation, to internet through Q&A sessions held after each speech. Here are a few highlights from the panels I am delighted to have caught.

▶ "Illusions Impossible: 5" discussion: J.J. Abrams

The moment J.J. Abrams came was announced and he appeared on stage, the crowd erupted in applause and cheer. Abrams is best known for leading the creative team behind television's most exciting and innovative series "Alias," "Lost" and "Fringe." He has since made a jump from directing for television to film, specifically, the highly anticipated "MI:3." It is Hollywood news that Tom Cruise pestered "MI:3" less a year while Abrams completed his contract with "Lost."

Abrams was so full of energy, he had the audience swallowing and dangling to his every word. He clearly had a blast sharing his directing experiences. He made mention of his first meeting with Tom Cruise, where he asked if can personally "Tom's giant armed head" Tom Cruise!" The fact that audience laughing and he reasonably declared that Tom Cruise belongs in a world out there, not in his. Abrams expressed that it was great working with Cruise as he was such a focused actor, made drafting from performing his own stunts to riding in a particularly emotional car.

During the Q&A, Abrams was reminded of how "Felicity" short lived contributed to the decline of the show's ratings. He was surprised how "Felicity" ends caught up after all this time, but he took the comment with great sense and quickly responded, a comment from the audience observed how Abrams makes "Felicity" feel to where she is now. She helped to describe an episode where a man was run over by a bus, when Abrams delightfully interrupted him. With a big smile on his face, she says, he told her that such was the first episode of "Felicity" he was directed and that he found her for leaving brought it up. Abrams then explained that he was always pleased that he was always played with the idea that he would be forever a guy, she'd have cop to be "Alias" before Batman.

Abrams became working with Jeffrey Bell (who played Felicity) on "MI:3" and made him feel that he had to direct the last episode. Though Abrams would have loved to direct the last episode of "Alias," he couldn't do it, he had to go on tour for "MI:3."

The last question Abrams entertained from the audience came from a young man who told him

ALTHOR loving a blast with Grant Morrison, the genius behind "Batman Arghm" and "The Invisibles."

J.J. ABRAMS

KEVIN Smith

FRANK Miller signing graphic novels at the Dark Horse booth.

"Daredevil" and "Spider-Man."

Smith was so cool with his interlocutor that he was able to make Abrams laugh so he poked fun at himself and spoke his mind. He started with unmentionable jokes relating to the "X-Men" and the catastrophe that was "Batman Cool."

He mentioned his close with the locking he received for mentioning Jennifer Lopez, who is considered not to have died soon enough in the film. He then hinted that "Jersey Girl" would have been cute as a 15-minute film and still we would've been interested." Due to the success of "Jersey Girl," Smith no longer wishes to make movies. Instead, he says, he's when's personal life could deserve his time with personal interest.

If you are wondering about Smith's "Green Hornet" project, it doesn't look like it will see the light of day. Though Smith wrote the script, he declined to direct the film adaptation. He explained that because he's already established a familiar with Green Hornet, he had to with more from the producer and difficulty to make the movie a huge hit.

Smith touted the audience with a clip from his upcoming film, "Clerks 2," at "The Passion of the Clerks." The scene was a hilarious debate between fans of "Star Wars" and "Lord of the Rings" on which was a better trilogy.

While "Clerks: Ass" is a personality outside of his, "Clerks 2" marks first stepping boxes in his "Clerks 1," and it's sequel stems to him. "Clerks 2," after all, is a film that answers questions in "Clerks 1," some small, following the growth of the characters from the first film, which we can assume answers a more mature Smith.

Smith said that, indeed, "Clerks 2" allowed him to express his directing experience with "Chasing Amy."

During the Q&A with Smith, a guy and the gallery got up and said Smith's video a look at a screenplay he wrote. The only one and the as of the crowd who proved and teased him away. After all, the journey to success can be achieved with determination. When asked for his best advice for aspiring writers, Smith replied, "Write what you know."

▶ "Superman: Heroine" discussion: Bryan Singer and artist Brian Azzarello

Bryan Singer is one of Hollywood's hottest directors to date. He was the one of the creative minds behind "The Usual Suspects," and is next known for directing "X-Men" and "X-Men 2."

Bryan Singer was not an engaging a public speaker as J.J. Abrams or Kevin Smith, but he managed to maintain the crowd's attention as everyone present showed a common interest: Superman.

Upon getting hold of the microphone, Singer immediately jumped to the Q&A, and here's what asked Brandon Routh—the man Clad Steel.

Both seemingly answered questions ranging from Superman's endgame to why Lex Luthor looks bald—completely with the bald design.

For the curious, Routh explained that the treatment I maintained the illusion of his chest, adding a sense of strength to his suit. Had the old logo 3 been used, it would have taken away his chest and Routh wouldn't look as muscular.

Singer openly discussed how directing "Superman Returns" was much more demanding than "X-Men." The direct to materials was the fanbase that he had to please. Singer was so quick of how the role of Superman is bigger in the Only Man fits who. Thus, it was an advantage that they did not have a famous actor portray him, and dealt with the baggage he would have on his shoulders the film.

Looking back, Singer believes was a children's unknown actor who can be signed up for Superman, just like Routh.

Singer said that "Superman Returns" merges with "Superman 2" and "Superman 3." "We are a different Superman as in the world has evolved on without him. Imagine the reaction to Superman's return after the bubble is no one many years, his attraction by Lois Lane, even if she now has a child and fiancé. We can also expect a much darker and villainous Lex Luthor, inspired by Kevin Spacey.

When asked if a live-action Superman movie is in store in their respective futures, Routh explained that he thinks both of "Superman 2." Notably, the scenes when Clark first Superman is with Lois in Daniel's Fall, having feelings and then having to come to terms with his powers. Singer explained that he wants, but aware for its memorable villains—particularly, two and General Zod.

▶ Writer and director Frank Miller

Frank Miller is a star in the world of comics. He entertained the superhero's strong suit with the likes of Batman, introducing new life into the comics scene in the 1980s.

Miller is credited with redefining Batman's character his groundbreaking saga, "The Dark Knight Returns." He has also worked on his own character such as Daredevil and Sin City.

"SMAR Wars" Concept Drawings

In the 1990s, he left DC and spent much of the decade creating small-scaling the movie noir that ended up "Sin City."

When Miller was introduced, the audience was held in a spell-it was not Miller's usual bash of sentences. Everyone was in his grip and was intensely listening as a number of unreleased lists about his influences and work.

Miller's early writing for "Daredevil" was brought up and is considered by critics as his most memorable work. Miller disagrees though, as he believes "Sin City" "The Hard Boiled" is his most romantic work. It is true, "Sin City" is the most romantic work, but it is also the most gruesome as most of Lovers' John Hartigan and Nancy Callahan. There are a years love Artie refuses to communicate and he ultimately sacrifices his life for her.

Miller has always maintained strong public stand when he comes to movies. Due to "Early Knight Returns," which he wrote during the Regan presidency. He wanted criticism on the media as TV just gives viewers the surface of things. Tackling serious political and social issues in comics earned this great acclaim. Miller was very aware particularly under the Regan administration, but was prevented from doing so.

Miller's next projects is called "Holy Terror, Batman," in which Gotham City is attacked by terrorists.

Miller is clearly fond of comparing himself with Superman. He says "Superman should go as we true, but an icon of what? What is his purpose? It's worth a look." He goes on to say that "Batman is a man in love with a city. I believe some-line have to protect Gotham." But, I am clearly more interested in such a difficult character Miller presents and creates. "Because he is the greatest superhero on earth and he can't fly."

Miller was asked when he would like the next generation of his profession to achieve. To this, Miller took strong pause and replied, "Better comics."

War of the raves

DJ Tiesto and Hed Kandy are slugging it out in Manila this March. Bling it on!

HITS SHE! Anne Manne and Tessa Dragon

LIKES IT pr Rodriguez and Tina Tiria

GOTTA HAVE. Yu ya, Patti Aragu!

PREVIEW HOTD. Mari Llorico and Pauline Juan

"THEY WEAR Uber sunglasses and Bvlgari watches

HOTD MANGAL. Ki Codborne's room

HOUSE OF LAUREL. Raja in Moto mode

BUNG BROTHERS. Perome Pedilla, Mylene Garcia, Paolo Peraza and Bobby Carmona

POST Valentine's Day with PYD. Paul Van Dyk in Moto attire

HITTIN Unotski! More parties, please!

THE NEWS might be too early for the screen pamphleteers, but it didn't see all deserve to know. Mark the date: March 13, because it's the date when all partypeople in the world agree—and be represented by the guests of the event.

On March 13, one of international house music's giants will move and mash. DJ Tiesto, considered to be the No. 1 DJ in the world, is coming to our shores. And he is not alone on the party circuit queue for dominance. Party hardy favorite Hed Kandy is also coming back to town March 11 all-too-short party control. Beat that.

Inasmuch as I love our nightlife (which I think can compare with the rest of the world), it is only now that our major world leaders in the party-music arena are going head-to-head in Manila is all started when Stephen Ko, a promoter who has been looking worries for quite some time now, got the general booking for DJ Tiesto. For many years now, everyone in the circuit has been trying to get a hold of him (their management only fielding us from the Olympian type of one), until it is only now that Manila is getting the chance to do so. The matter is going to happen inside the cavernous halls of the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC).

Big Pink, on the other hand, led by Kendall Delgado and the duo Black Chandit) widens Philippine Chenk and Big Pink (DJ Lady Antoine Peñasco), decided to mount a head-to-collision of the Times event with its own Hed Kandy gig, to be held at another giant party venue, the World Trade Center. They even plan to give you complete CDs to lure the revelers.

Of late, the Big Pink crew has had a monopoly of the big crowd-gathers, with heavy support from some stalwarts such as Rimar's Ashley Mobile and Silvanna (which hosted and sponsored last month's massive Paul Van Dyk event, photos on this page). Now, Neighborly group poses a stiff challenge, with the world's foremost optimists

Flora Yap

are carrying the top billing on the Ch marquee.

Rah it in

To Big Pink's credit (with Rah Chenk's assistance/assistant), though, it has always managed the cause of non DJs and the quality of music. Before DJ Tiesto's pending the other week, we had been very timid about his status of being the perfect party experience should be. (There are better-organized party parties for the crowd of things to get in the club—and not "overly-lively-feeling VIP" areas, like how it is in our shores.) Fit with Pinto now takes the reins in booking the Club, along with Lemuel and Joanna, to make sure every cues event is filled with nothing but the best the Manila party-public (and other one, even those within the region) can enjoy.

Did you know that some artists in the Philippines have increased because of these parties? Party people from all over the world are fully aware of these mixings and would gladly hop on a plane to catch their favorite music makers the same way (one would fly to Hong Kong to catch Abba in Singapore to watch the American Idols live in concert. Those are party pious flowing into our economy.

In the end, who is the real winner? Of Because with three party promotional groups jockeying to gain prominence in the field, they only stoke themselves better, and, in doing so, they also make our party lives livelier and more progressive than it is. I just wish they had really have to be mixed where their three gigs and not let pride or whatever negative instinct get in the way. I know how hard it is to create these happenings, and I sincerely hope they all up both venues. It's so cute to pack them spaces.

So my advice is, let's give both sides all the support we can give. In the end, we will all be the winners in this party bonfire.

Vets, vets, vets! The fluvial groups in our music.

Meet your new best friend

By Gabriel M. Mercado
JBO Contributor

NOKIA LAUNCHED ITS LATEST 6 series phones, and the 6overal one of those phones is very likely going to be your next one.

In quality, you'd have to think of phones as tools rather than just things. Maybe you're a graduating student getting a new job, starting a new part of work, or otherwise experiencing something new in your life. Or maybe you like to have a phone with the latest innovation, but without being overwhelmingly "techie." In other words, you're pretty much like the rest of us.

Answer? Again this year, Nokia will release the new 6-series phones worldwide. Nokia is looking to grow its "mid-tier" or middle-class market, by adopting a "replacement" market share. "New phones" approach, offering consumers an upgrade on what they have rather than a wholesale new phone altogether.

The new 6 series phones are designed for people who like to have the latest phone features but don't want to lose the familiarity of previous models.

The new series is also for the guy or girl who gets frustrated with "super hi-tech" phones, but is equally uncomfortable with low-simple models.

Nokia hopes the 6 series hits the right mix of form and function-savvy.

6070 Key Features:
- Flat fit-screen Radio
- VGA Camera with video recorder
- MMS
- Nokia Xpress Audio messaging

Nokia's new 6 series phones command attention for their form-and-function savvy

- Push to talk
- Instant messages

NOKIA 6 (3)

Marc Hardenfelt, head of product marketing, Business Unit Management for Nokia, describes the 6070 as a phone "for people who want a phone without a camera, and are looking to move up." The 6070 is a simple device 40, four-band phone with GPRS, EDGE and HS (6020) connectivity in a fairly sturdy looking package in dark gray or light blue.

6030 Key Features:
- Bluetooth Wireless Technology
- FM Radio
- VGA Camera and self-portrait possibility
- Nokia Xpress Audio messaging
- Push-to-talk

An update on 6020, this one has bluetooth. The front-side camera lens allows self-portraits, and the same for every Filipinoker savvy user out there who is obsessed with taking pics. One of those "flip phones" in the lineup, it is available in black and red.

6220 key features:
- Stylish and compact feel design with excellent keypad ergonomics
- 1.3-megapixel camera with flash digital zoom
- Wireless connectivity with Bluetooth
- Music player (mp3, mp4, m4a, wma)

One of the 6 (2)'s claims to fame is its storage capability via a micro-SD card, that allows up to a whopping 2 GB. This, plus a 128x128 screen and a music-format music player, makes it a viable upgrade for mobile video or audio fans. You can use bluetooth, infrared, USB—and attach files to e-mail.

6233 key features:
- Stylish and compact fold design with push-to-open functionality and excellent keypad ergonomics
- 2.2 true-color display with 16.7 million colors
- 1.3 megapixel camera with flash digital zoom
- Wireless connectivity with bluetooth
- Music player (mp3, mp4, m4a, wma)

The 6233's main feature is its push-to-open function, which makes opening the flip phone easier one hand (possible). It has big, expressive keypads. Other 6233 features are similar to other models', with a good 128x160 (65k) color, blue-tooth and n-radio and mp3 player.

NOKIA 6133

- Classic design in stainless steel
- Stereo speakers with 3D sound effects
- 2 megapixel camera with flash digital zoom, landscape mode
- Improved grid e-mail with easy settings
- 3G multimedia, video sharing, face detection of games, music, video and ringing tones
- QMA digital rights management 1.0

Bluetooth (wireless) it is "highly technical" but doesn't look it." in a sleek stainless-steel cover, the 6233 offers a 2 megapixel, 8x digital zoom camera, 3G connectivity, and QMA digital rights management to anticipation of content coming in the 3G.

The 6233, other 1600x1200 pixel camera shots which you then share via MCMMS or Blips, one is on GE card and send via e-mail. The phone comes in classic black or silver tone.

NOKIA 6070

NOKIA 6233

You have seven days left...

...BEFORE THE DEADLINE MOVES makes your dreams come true!

We have seven days left until the Feb. 28 deadline of the 1st Philippine Graphic/Nokia Fotobods. Remember to vote for your favorite using number text Gateway and Fotobod bookings.

The contest is open to all Filipinos, as part of Valentine's special deadline—all Filipinos for the unforgettable memories he got during his/her successful text-signing last year ever.

Submit your original entries for either the print or the mobile categories. Just think, with your artful imagination, paper and pen, you can be PHAMOUS!

All winning entries and honorable mentions will be published in a special supplement, with a foreword by text Gateway fan, self.

The winner is proudly brought to you by the Philippine Daily Inquirer's 24x7 and Inquirer, as well as blog magazine, 30-30 and then I'm the annual date and downloadable application form, that www.fotobodsmobile.com or e-mail writing.contest@fotobodsmobile.com. Good luck and keep those creative juices flowing!

We have winners!

THE THREE GODDESS OF THE 24/7 Pinoy Cupid promoters:

- Annalou Margarita Mariano of Quezon City
- Cheryl Policar of Philippine Airlines
- Jhoane Morales of Foreign Service Institute

Three lucky winners will bring home gift certificates from Accuzaid, SM, Chocnosake Inc., Met Strokes, Glasgow Glass, Shakey's, Bollywood's Cafe Havana, Dencio's, Solomon Grand House, Sahara Sands, Metro Pet Bar, Tia Maria's, California Nails and Cosy Spa, tickets to Enchanted Kingdom, Cards overflow from Tom Orpia, a dress from Xantalon, United Edition 2006 Ltd. and Hive Streetwear, perfumes from Ralph Lauren and Carlsund, makeup and skincare products from Slic Urmuan, goodie bags from Unilever and six-month subscriptions to YES!'s myYES. They will also get to enjoy the prodable bachelor at the Hotel Philippine Plaza.

The winners of our iPod Shuffle promo is:

- Kim Sin

Their entries will be published in next week's 24/7 Pulsion will be notified on how they can claim their prizes.

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LIFESTYLE 2day

Your geisha reading list

By Pam Pardo

If the movie has left you intrigued about the geisha lifestyle, pick up these books and start reading

Geisha fever

After a long wait, the film adaptation of Arthur Golden's celebrated novel "Memoirs of a Geisha" will finally hit local theaters today.

2bLF celebrates this colorful film with a special issue featuring your very own geisha reading list, exquisite kimonos and a hot Japanese resto that's sure to please your palate.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE FILM version of "Memoirs of a Geisha" will spawn renewed interest in the geisha culture, many books have been written about the subject—both fiction and non-fiction—but sadly not a lot of titles are available locally.

One book that would be interesting to read is Liza Dalby's "Geisha." Dalby, an American graduate student of anthropology, made history as the first white woman to become a geisha in Kyoto, Japan, in the '70s. With her writing and her devotion to the subject, she helped many Western misconceptions about the geisha. Waits to see by reader Izzah Amani later left us empty-handed, but we did find these other titles.

'Memoirs of a Geisha'

Arthur Golden

If you haven't read the novel on which the movie was based, it would be a good idea to start now. And if you've read it, revisit its pages and compare it with the film version.

Follow the journey of Chiyo, from her days in the fishing village to her transformation into Sayuri, one of Gion's most remembered geishas. "Memoirs of a Geisha" is a fairy tale, a soap opera, an exquisite story rife with villains and heroines, greed and kindness, triumphs and tragedies, beauty and ugliness, passion, manipulation and never-ending color.

The gripping first novel reads like a classic. To say that it's hard to put down is an understatement. Some books are so good that after finishing them you want to turn to page one and read again. "Memoirs of a Geisha" is one of them.

'Geisha: A Living Tradition'

Kyoko Aihara

Aihara Kyoko utilizes to the explorer the world of the geisha. Although the book's primary focus is

drawing from the geisha lore in the modern world, the book offers much more than that.

With chapters devoted to Kyoto's Hanamichi Ceremony (a hanamichi is a 6-tatami area in Japan where the geisha live and entertain), the reader (an appreciative geisha), hanayomi, performances and the events that prepare a geisha's calendar... the book provides insights into the lives of Japan's women of art.

There are many interesting details, including how the changing seasons affect the look, the clothes and the accessories of the geisha. There are pages packed with information on the history, hairstyles, makeup of the geisha, their wardrobes, fills for the geisha and events have many criticisms has affected their every day. (My favorite is a photo of a geisha carrying a Salvatore Ferragamo shopping bag.)

Think of it as a crash course... Geisha Lifestyle 101. The book includes many full-color photos and even a glossary and index for easy reading.

'Geisha: Women of Japan's Flower and Willow World'

Tess Johnson and Mary L. Martin

If Kyoko Aihara's book explores the lives of the geisha in the modern world, this book examines their colorful past, told through beautiful and even haunting images. The photos are drawn from decades-old postcards that were painstakingly marked down, most of which are now collector's items. The book is filled with over 500 images, with text and opinions that not only explain their significance but also impart wisdom on geisha lifestyle and history.

There are chapters on women's role in Edo-Era Japan; on the rise of the geisha and the latter's furtherance with the geisha, among others. The chapter on Iemoto continuum and beyond geisha is extra-interesting. Read about several geisha whose misadventures would be rubbed bolder barriers from living in the present world. The handsome book—which also is

POSTNOT BY BILL MINEO

A LITPIN BY JESS ABRERA

MARTIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY BY PAT LIMJOCO

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

HUTTS BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PANALIGAN

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

FOR BORN TODAY You're a smart, cool-headed, generous person. You have vivid hues, because of this, you are often dedicated to a noble cause. This is a year might be horrible for you personally or very terrible. But some wonder like world's better place. Expect many changes this year, perhaps as significant as in 1997.
Birthstone of: Amethyst, aventurine, lapis lazuli, golden citrine, blue sapphire, sardonyx, sardonix

ARIES (March 21 to April 19). Your angles will be complicated by some unusually changes your beliefs, opinions, or your points of view about something. This is a good time for you to be powerful. But you find you're influenced even more than you suspect.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20). Whether you're an almost someone, or almost someone else, you're going to be good friendship online. You want to make sure you get your point. You find that something is not going to be good friendship online. You know the classic why.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20). Somebody else has insights about how you see the grown. Instead. You might not agree. Despite that, you should apply their ideas to them when.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22). You'll work very hard at your job to do. This is a good time to finish up and work can't get out of bed! Your energy level. You might be something that is slightly uncertain or very private.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22). You love passion and romance. You're not shy. Of course, you're a romantic. You want to be with someone who knows you. Don't be afraid.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22). You have the courage to show up then, but you're not sure. This is a day. Subtle anxiety or, for frustration and jealousy. Whether angry or anyone would you down away.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22). You're sometimes you're right about something. You're not afraid to say it. You're not afraid to agree with you or acknowledge your views. Don't try to convince others! Use your way of thinking. Lighten up.!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21). You feel strongly about something. Something evokes. Despite points, you could almost convince your enemy to accept your way. Either way, you can't get this idea out of your head.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21). You have to get more about your relationship. Compromise your opinions or your beliefs. Strive to them. You're probably not a good thing.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19). You may know someone has no value with his decisions get. Don't be afraid to speak your mind. Nothing to say would mislead. You're like acting without focus.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18). Your friends might try to persuade you to do something. You don't have to. Think about this.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20). Commitment with lovers and partners are positive today. You could have a misunderstanding.
People have no do sense thing – but do you want to?

DAILY CROSSWORD

BEH BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE BY MANG ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHONGLO

TULBOK BY RAFU MAD 'BITUIN HILAHBILING

SALMON and Cream Cheese Maki

SESAME Prawn on Toast with Sweet Chili Sauce

CHICKEN Teriyaki with hyacinth and soy garnish

Slip into this Red Kimono

By Pam Pastor

THE RESTAURANT'S NAME came to them in a dream. And while turning Red Kimono into reality took more than just closing their eyes for deep slumber, Mike Dargani and his wife Nameera still believe they were lucky.

"Everything just fell into place. Be places fit," Mike said.

Luck began with the restaurant's location—they were able to secure a prime spot in The Fort Strip. "We were very excited about the location. The Fort Strip is happening," Mike added.

Mike signed the lease for the space just hours before he and Nameera left for a vacation in Europe, a journey that played a part in building their restaurant's concept. "That trip was instrumental," Nameera said. "The moving was amazing. We were overwhelmed by creativity."

They returned hope with new energy and set to burning with fresh ideas. And in three months time, Red Kimono opened for business. This isn't their first venture in the food scene—Red Kimono is the 20th restaurant they have opened.

Red Kimono's interiors don't look like your traditional Japanese ones. It's trendy and the vibe is upbeat.

"We wanted to do modern Japanese. We wanted to break things, to play with ingredients," Mike said. And that's exactly what they did.

Mike and Nameera created the menu with their executive chef who had trained with several Japanese chefs. That hard work has paid off in the food following Red Kimono has gained since opening in July of last year. "Re-response has been amazing," Mike said.

That's no big surprise because the food is good.

Sushi fans should check out the sushi for lunch. They're so good they can turn non-sushi eaters into instant converts. Try the Salmon and Cream Cheese Maki (P180), which is rolled with fresh salmon and Philadelphia cream cheese. The Crunchy Maki set sensuous rolls that are stuffed and topped with tuna (P180), eel (P180) or scallop (P200). Try the California Crunch (P190), tuna—a deep-fried crispy version of the good-old California Maki.

Other great appetizers include the Cashew Ebi served with Wasabi Mayonnaise (P150) and the Sesame Prawn on Toast with Sweet Chili Sauce (P240), both of which are must-orders. Tofu lovers would enjoy the Layered Spinach and Tofu with Sweet Miso Paste (P130).

Diners have a lot of options for the main course. If chicken is your favorite, choose from Chicken Teriyaki (grilled chicken in teriyaki sauce with a generous bay garnish, P190), Chicken Katsu Curry (breaded chicken served with curry sauce, P220) or Grilled Miso Chicken (served with a side of macaroni salad and steamed white rice, P210).

Meat-eaters would love the Ginger and Garlic Steak (grilled fillet of beef tenderloin with a vegetable stirfry, P995) and the Beef Teppanyaki which comes in local (P550) and US (Black Angus (P850) variants.

If seafood is your choice, order the Prawn Teppanyaki (stir fried prawns and vegetables, P395). The prawns are so plump and juicy. The Gindara with Sweet Miso (P595) is likewise delectable, the fish succulent and its texture perfect.

Red Kimono also serves Kimonomito—flavorful rice served in individual pots and generously topped with chicken, beef, shrimp or a mixture of all three. It's a meal in itself.

If you still have room for dessert, try the Chocolate Balls (P140)—a big hit with kids—or the yummy Prawn Pie, which is served with a big scoop of vanilla ice cream. You can also try the Tempura Ice Cream or the Flourless Chocolate Cake.

And for those who want to cap their meal with a nice drink, Red Kimono's sake cocktails are a good choice.

One of Nameera's priorities was making sure the menu items wouldn't be overpriced. "We're such foodies, we're so obsessed with food, we love to eat out but we always try to find good value. We expect that in a restaurant," she said.

Red Kimono is located at Unit 1A at the G/F of The Fort Strip, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig. Call 8166622.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.

CHOCOLATE Balls

FLOURLESS Chocolate Cake

After watching 'Memoirs of a Geisha,' drop by Red Kimono for great Japanese food with a modern twist

CRUNCHY Ebi Maki

KAMAMITSHI Rice

CRABSTICK Roll with Wasabi Mayo

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Wednesday, February 22, 2006

Find out who will be the next...

ON YOUR IDOL NETWORK ABC

American Idol

Wednesday & Thursday 10PM

Now Playing!

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Nippon beauties

By Pam Pastor
Photos by Ryan Lim

IF YOU'RE DREAMING OF INCORPORATING the glorious kimono into your wardrobe (yes, it can look pretty hot with jeans) but trips to the mall have left you with zilch, we have the answer.

And we, you must have to go all the way to Japan—just Lucban, Quezon.

Sonny Gimenez, who has a passion for all things Asian, has been creating beautiful kimono sets using rich materials and fabrics. Some of his kimonos are even reversible.

He doesn't mass-produce his creations, so you can be sure your kimono is unique. Gimenez can also make kimonos to suit your own specifications.

And he doesn't stop at kimonos. He also makes other Asian-inspired clothes and has become popular for his home accessories as well. People love his placemats, napkins, tablecloths, throw pillows, bags, bed covers and kimonos.

Although he sometimes participates in bazaars and wedding fairs, Gimenez mostly works from his shop in Lucban.

He was a discovery—a gift that arrived just as we were ready to pass off 100 bought silk robes as kimonos.

Sonny's shop is on Barangay Isabang 2 in Lucban, Quezon. Call (042) 5409411 or (0928-5766122).

Do you want the fashion freaks to visit your store or check out your wares? E-mail us at the fashionfreaks@yahoo.com.

MOST kimonos are reversible, with different designs on each side.

Sony Ericsson

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Rush to the nearest Globe Business Center or 918 or call 751-8888.

SONY uses silk and satin to make his kimonos but clients can request other fabrics.

PRICES range from P700-P1,200.

FEEL like Sayuri in one of these creations.

Your geisha . . .

From page D1

shelves a glossary and bibliography—in a captivating read that can spend hours poring over it.

'Madame Sadayakko: The Geisha Who Bewitched the West'

Lesley Downer

Madame Sadayakko is included and tagged as "The Powerhouse Star" in the chapter on legendary geishas in "Geisha: Memoirs of Japan's Flower and Willow World." In "The Geisha Who Bewitched the West," Lesley Downer tells the legendary geisha's life story.

Downer, who was applauded for her book "Memoirs of the Pleasure Quarters," put together Sadayakko's story using newspaper clippings, other writings and accounts by relatives who remember Sadayakko. Sadayakko's marriage to a poor actor led to her role as the first geisha who performed internationally. She became a hit in the US and in Europe. Her image spawned numerous books by famous artists including Pablo Picasso. She also appeared in Harper's Bazaar magazine. It has also been said that she inspired Puccini's Madame Butterfly.

"The Geisha Who Bewitched the West," which follows Sadayakko's rise as a performer, includes black-and-white photos of the actress. Downer's 2000 book has been released in a mid-life "Memoirs of a Geisha." With her words, Downer paints a portrait of this bold and bewitching geisha.

The books are available at Fully Booked branches or nationwide.